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UNKNOWN KENT

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

A PAINTER IN PALESTINE.

A DWELLER IN MESOPOTAMIA.

THE LAST CRUSADE.

ADVENTURES WITH A SKETCH BOOK.

A CRUISE ACROSS EUROPE.

THE BODLEY HEAD

CANTERBURY

THE ANGEL TOWER

UNKNOWN KENT

BY DONALD MAXWELL

Being a series of unmethodical Explorations of the County illustrated in line and colour by the Author

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ac.

R.C. 59

JOHN LANE THE BODLEY HEAD LIMITED
LONDON MCMXXI

1921

WILLIAM CLOWES AND SONS, LIMITED, LONDON AND BECCLES, ENGLAND

TO MY COLLEAGUES OF
THE GRAPHIC

In labours, in watchings, in fastings;
By evil report and good report:
As unknown, and yet well known;
As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing;
As poor, yet making many rich;
As having nothing, and yet possessing all things.

A DOORWAY IN THE WEALD.

PREFACE

To write about the whole of Kent and to give even a tithe of the sketches acquired in years of rambling about its ways would be to make a catalogue. It has seemed to me better, therefore, to leave out all reference to places when there is not room to say more than a word or two about them, however interesting they may be.

The reader, in looking through this book for the first time, will probably experience the same emotion as a certain Quaker, when in a dream he reached Heaven—surprise at not finding many old friends whose presence was confidently anticipated, and equal astonishment at the inclusion of those whom he did not in the least expect to meet. But for all this, I will be a good guide and lead him into places not easily found, and show them to him in such an atmosphere that he will see the things that are hidden. I will tell him that the loveliest glades of the garden of England are composed of slag heaps—slag heaps of the days of Good Queen Bess, but slag heaps for all that; and I will dwell on this fact because I am an optimist believing that beauty is not only a joy for ever, but that it will

ultimately prevail. I will take him to despised industrial regions and cause him to see the glamour and mystery therein of old Baghdad and the Arabian Nights.

I have had to leave out whole sketch-books of drawings. At the last minute, however, I have included a doorway of Mr. Lewis Hind's Elizabethan cottage, Island Farm, near Biddenden, because it expresses so well the spirit of these old Wealden half-timbered houses, and will stand as a type for many others.

My thanks are due to the Editor of the *Graphic* for kind permission to include in this book both notes and sketches which have, in some form, been published in that paper; also acknowledgment to the Editors of the *Yachting Monthly* and *Saturday Review* respectively, for similar courtesies.

THE BEACON,
BORSTAL,
ROCHESTER.
September 21, 1921.

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I

THE TRACK IN THE WOOD

"LIKE A RIVER OF GRASS BETWEEN THICKLY WOODED SHORES" (p. 10).

THE TRACK IN THE WOOD

IT came to me one day as I gazed upon the Medway from the heights of Borstal that I had explored many lands and written of many places but singularly little about my own county, Kent. And this was neither from want of love for it nor from any flagging of enthusiasm on the subject of its highways and byways, but rather because of its very familiarity and the ease with which material could be gathered together. The impulse to discover something is largely fostered by the inaccessibility of the thing to be discovered. Had America been an island within sight of Lisbon, probably Columbus would never have fitted out an expedition to explore

ROCHESTER CASTLE AND BRIDGE, FROM BORSTAL.

it. Eldorados might have been had for the asking, and no one worried about them.

The wonderfulness of Kent was stamped upon my imagination when I was furthest away from England. It was in India that I saw potential pictures of moonlight in the land of cement. It was in Persia that I came to feel more than ever the Eastern magic of the chalklands at home, and it was in the Garden of Eden that I began to realize more fully the richer pictorial possibilities of the Garden of England.

So I vowed a vow. And the vow was this. That I should travel through Kent with log-book and sketch-book as an explorer in a new land, taking nothing for granted, and working my way along, topographically, by my wits. Having made my resolve it was not long before I started. Brown, my faithful Achates on many similar trips, said he would

THE WOODED HILLS ABOVE HALLING.

like to come too, so he joined up, full of enthusiasm. We left the warmth and cheery comfort of a fire for the bleak highway on a bitterly cold day at about three of the clock.

Brown carried numerous books, making the sum total of his possessions somewhat heavy. My impedimenta consisted of a small haversack, a large sketch-book, and a mysterious tin containing a medley of chalks and paint arranged so unsystematically that I can never find anything I want. My children refer to this last item somewhat contemptuously as the *muddle box*, a rather good description, I think. The white chalk is the great offender. It always rolls about and coats all the other chalks with white, so that it is impossible to tell their real colour. It also renders indiarubber peculiarly ineffective and even dangerous.

Steering a more or less westerly course we marched boldly down the village street. Unmindful of the fact that we were

bent on an epoch-making exploration of Kent, Borstal took not the slightest notice of our determined look and heroic bearing. It was bitterly cold, and I felt that I should need a great deal of determination if I succeeded in getting much sketching done before sunset.

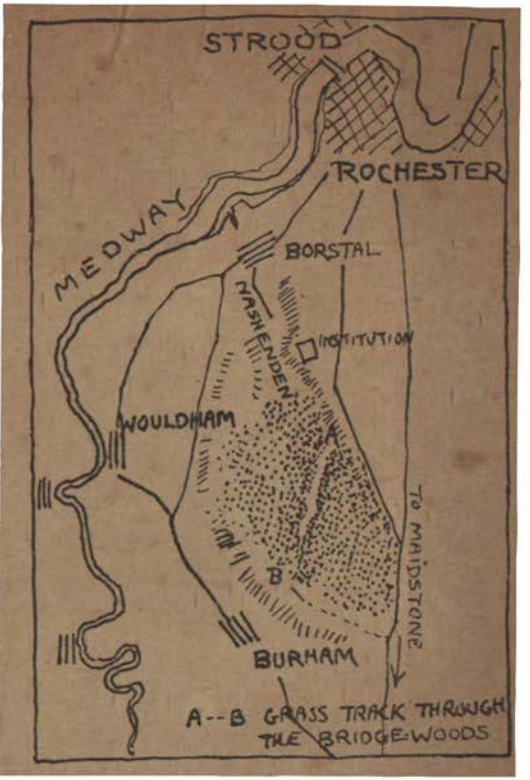
Lector: You old fraud! Trying to make dear, simple-minded old ladies imagine that you had a terribly rough time. You know quite well I saw you only a few days afterwards living in great luxury and cribbing sketches made on the spot from a series of picture postcards.

Pictor: Hush! Don't go and give the whole show away. You must start off by letting everybody have a glimpse of the artist as a most terrible fellow who will stick at nothing. Besides, there is the publisher. At present he does not suspect me. If he once got hold of that picture-postcard idea he might publish *them*, and then where should I be?

What shall I say of Borstal? If I am out to rediscover Kent I must not shirk my responsibilities because I am near home. Well, Borstal is frankly hideous, a utilitarian yellow brick blot, perched on the hillside with a glorious view of the river and the valley of the Medway. It is situated in a position that many famous towns might envy, and for that reason it is rather a tragedy that it should be so exceptionally ugly. The architecture of Borstal might be described as belonging to the ironic style. Crowned by a fort and dominated by the old convict prison—now H.M. Institution for the reformation of young offenders—it straggles downhill in the direction of Rochester to become a single row of houses overlooking the

THE MEDWAY AT BORSTAL

river, roomy and comfortable if not beautiful, till Borstal Road reaches Fort Clarence in the chain of the old moated and walled defences of Rochester and Chatham. I could wish that some imaginative district council would make a law that every yellow brick house in Borstal must be whitewashed. It would not be any use a few householders doing it. The scheme should be a comprehensive one. Then I should have hopes of my own village even from a pictorial point of view. We should look like an Italian mountain town, and artists from far and near would come to sketch us.



When we came to the church, we entered, for it is always open, and I showed Brown the seven lamps. He had not seen them before. Here is the tale.

The Story of the Seven Lamps of Borstal

Once upon a time there lived in the City of Damascus an old brassworker who made lamps. And he was a cunning

workman, a Christian and a Syrian, and the workshop wherein he worked was in the Street which is called Straight. And he made seven lamps to hang before the altar of God, even as the lamps of fire that are the seven spirits of God.

Now it chanced that about the same time that he had finished the fashioning of these lamps a painter came into the City, and he sought out the Street which is called Straight, and came to the workshop of the old man. And he spoke with the lampmaker and said, Show me, I pray, lamps of brass. And he showed him the seven lamps which he had made. And when the stranger saw them he was moved with great admiration, and he said, I will buy these lamps, and they shall hang in the Church of St. Matthew which is in Borstal. Now the old brassworker was glad when he said I will buy the lamps, and he said, I will fashion yet more of the cunning work which is in these lamps, and they shall be ready to take into the ship in thirty and one days.

Now the painter returned to his own land, and before the thirty and one days were passed there was a great war. And the lamps came not. Then he said to himself, Now that the Turks have become our enemies the lamps that were in Damascus shall never come unto Borstal.

And the Turks took the workshop of the lampmaker, and took all the brass and made the lampmaker and his men work like slaves, and they made instruments of war for the Turks. But ere the officer of the Turks had entered, the old man had taken the lamps and buried them in the ground, for he said,

THE DEDICATION OF THE
SEVEN LAMPS OF BORSTAL

Lest the ungodly find them and the Church of St. Matthew at Borstal be desolate.

Now the painter served in the King's ships, and the war raged sore, and he forgot the lamps that were in Damascus. But after five years, when the war was spent and the tumult had abated, it chanced that he was sent on duty to Damascus. And then he called to mind the lamps, and said, I will go unto the house of the lampmaker, which is in the Street called Straight. Peradventure he is dead and his goods scattered, or peradventure he liveth.

And when he had come thither he found the workshop, and the old man remembered him when he came in. And he was overjoyed, and took him into the deep cellar and uncovered the lamps. And the painter sought to pay him money for preserving the lamps, but the lampmaker would take nothing, for he said, Are they not thy lamps, and for the Church of St. Matthew? And so the lamps came to Borstal.

And when the feast of St. Paul was come, there was great rejoicing in Borstal, and the Bishop came to dedicate the seven lamps. Now it chanced that the painter before the war had with him two friends at Borstal, but both were killed, and he alone was left. So he said, Let the lamps be as a memorial to them. And the whole company of priests and singers in the church marched in procession to the War Shrine and made prayers for the souls of the Dead, and they marched back again to the altar with loud singing. And they had vestments of scarlet and of gold, and the Priest of Borstal took a torch and kindled it at the lights of the altar and gave it to the Bishop. And the Bishop kindled the lamps, and they

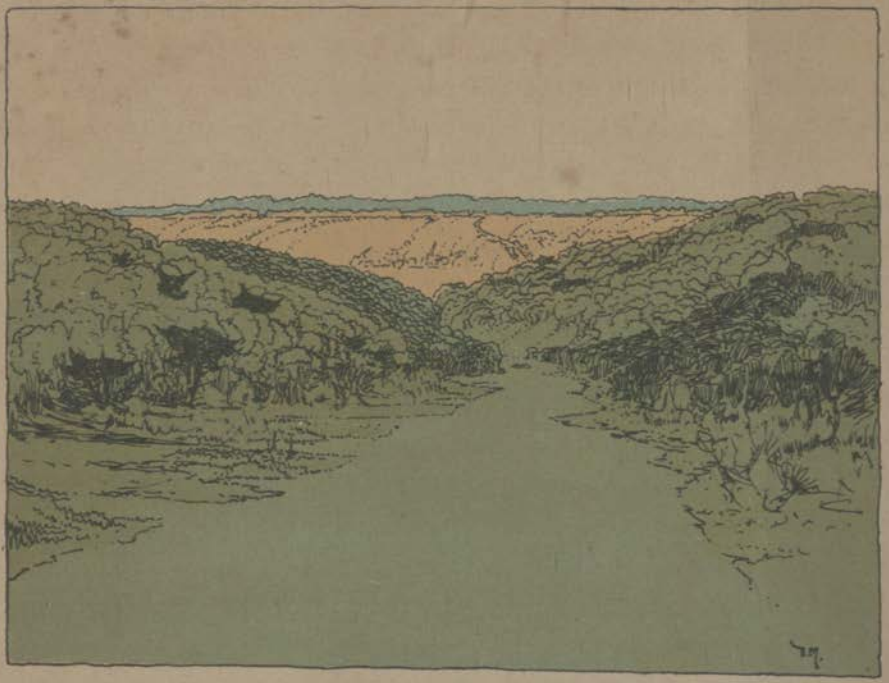
burned even as the lamps of fire before the throne of Heaven. And the seven lamps were dedicated to the Glory of God and in memory of Victor Morgan and Luke Taylor who fell in the great war. And the people of Borstal remembered that day.

***

After leaving the church we took the path by the school, past the Fort and the rather gloomy precincts of the old convict prison, now "H.M. Institution for the Reformation of Young Offenders," and gained the high-road that runs from Rochester to Maidstone, past Fort Bridgewood and along the top of the down. To the right lies the wooded valley of Nashenden, some four hundred feet below.

The weather was not very clear, and partly owing to this circumstance we seemed to be looking down on an amazing thing—a glacier cut through the dark, tree-covered ridge that overlooks Burham. I have sketched the effect at the head of this chapter. Brown immediately christened it the *Mer de Grass*, and proposed an ascent. To get there we had to go down into the valley by means of a track, appropriately called Stoney Lane, past a little stone farm. The woodland walk soon opened out into a glade, a fruitful place for wild strawberries, as many Borstal children know, and seemed like a river of grass between thickly wooded shores.

The track steepens as it nears the crest of the hill and the Robin Hood Inn. A line of gaunt and windblown trees make a striking sky-line. Looking back, the high ground of the Rochester road appeared in golden light, the woods and the green track by which we had come in shadow.



A WOODLAND GLADE NEAR ROCHESTER

In some weather the view from this point is a remarkable one. In this light, however, it looked flat and uninteresting. I have seen it sometimes on a November afternoon, when a huge red sun is lighting up the river so that it has the appearance of a fiery serpent lashing itself in coils across the plain between blue-wooded heights dimmed with faint layers of smoke and mist. The serried ranks of chimneys and multitudinous kilns and quays create an intangible world that some enchanter might have produced by magic, and it is only the reality of a tug and a train of barges, or the plodding workaday aspect of a stumpy on her way down to Rochester that destroy the illusion.

Some people always run down smoke and chimneys, but given enough smoke and enough chimneys the most fantastic and wonderful effects can be seen. To the painter, indeed, it does not really matter so much what a thing is. It matters more what it suggests. In the sketch of some giant bottles, reproduced as the frontispiece of this book, there is a good test of this theory. Show it to the average man as an illustration to the *Arabian Nights* and he will rather like it, but tell him that it is a very realistic and faithful drawing of some bottle kilns not very far from Rochester, and he will immediately either discount its romance or doubt its accuracy.

The comparisons which I have made so often between the cement world of the Medway country and the magic East have been received generally with roars of laughter. The fact remains, however, that when I show people portfolios of sketches made in Persia, India, or the nearer East and throw

in a few Medway subjects to add variety, invariably they chose some of these as the most characteristic example of mystery and glamour.

For a time we kept along the fields at the top of the hill, enjoying the wide prospect of winding river and busy industry far below, and descended by a rough path in the direction of Snodland, where the Medway loops itself into horse-shoe bends to disappear from sight at Aylesford.

II

THE QUEST OF THE MILLS OF MAIDSTONE

OLD WATER-MILL, BOXLEY.

A RAGSTONE QUARRY, BOUGHTON.

THE QUEST OF THE MILLS OF MAIDSTONE

MAPS are popularly supposed to assist a traveller in finding his way and explaining by diagram the nature of the country through which he is passing. As far as Brown and I were concerned, they led often to disappointment and invariably to wrong conclusions. At all times Brown is blessed with a tremendous imagination, but give him a map and he will fairly let himself go in romantic speculation.

I must say there is a good deal of extenuation for Brown's romancing. Even an ordnance survey map can be very

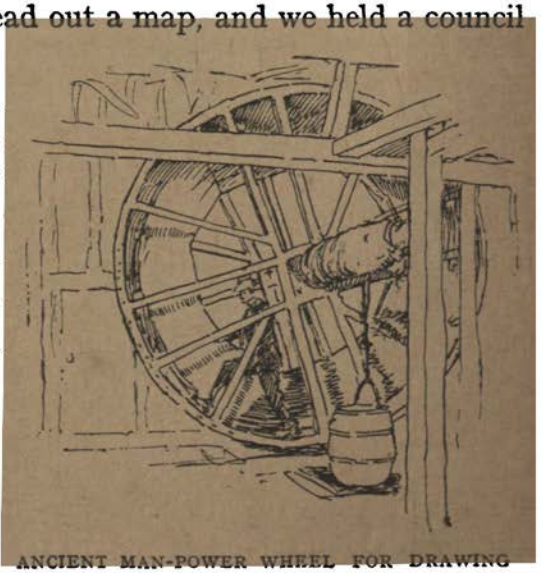
BEAM OVER DOORWAY IN GREAT CULAND FARM, BURHAM.

misleading. When you come across the word **Castle**, not "castle," you have a right to expect something just recognizable as a building. In the case of towns, big ones are marked in large lettering, and little ones in smaller type, corresponding with their diminishing size. Not so, however, with castles. Queenborough Castle, for instance, which is a water-tank on a slight bump in a railway station, is announced in the same dignified lettering as Leeds Castle, near Maidstone, one of the finest examples of a moated mediæval building in England. I think in the case of an obvious fraud like Queenborough, the map should be lettered ELTSAC or ƎLTSAƆ. Then we should know where we were. Or, better still, why not work

out a system of symbolic lettering to indicate the condition of the building, something like this—

Ancient castle in fine preservation ..	Castle
Restored, but with some ancient features	CASTLE
Partly in ruins	$CA_S{}^{\perp}{}_{L}E$
Doubtful site	CCCCCASTLE
Modern	CASTLE
Modern, built for war profiteer ..	£CASTLE

In the case of the quest of the Mills of Maidstone, it was a map that was our undoing. Coming down from the hill to the region of the river, we sat down in a field by a row of bottle kilns. Brown spread out a map, and we held a council to determine our route. I rather wanted to push into "the Pyrenees" (the wild chalk-gorge country by North Halling, across the river), but Brown's eye caught the oft-repeated word *mill* tucked away in small type all round Maidstone, so we decided on water-mills as our next objective.



ANCIENT MAN-POWER WHEEL FOR DRAWING WATER, BURHAM.

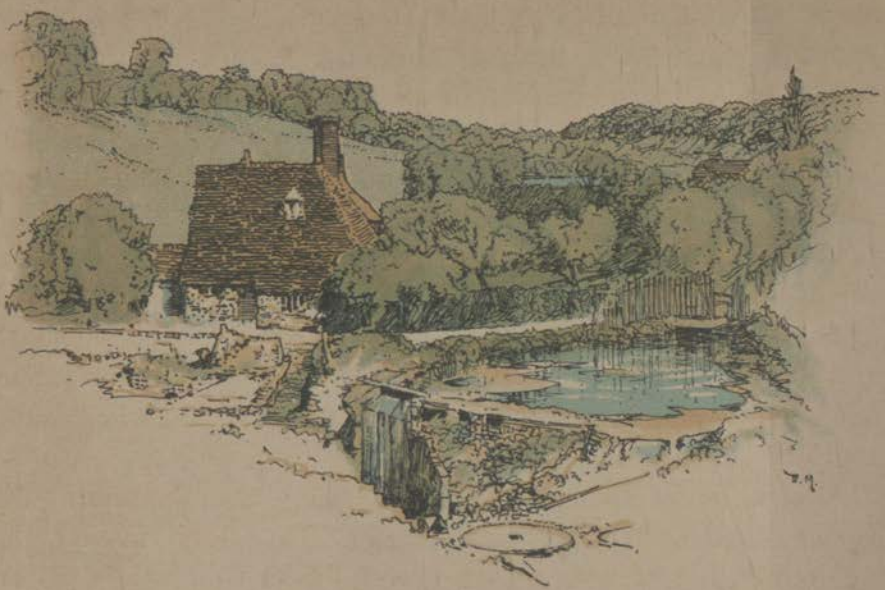
The first one on the list was quite near,

according to Brown, who found *ancient water-wheel* marked as at Great Culand Farm at Burham. It seemed an impossible place for a mill, as the farm stands on the slope of the hill. However, Brown soon proved that in a chalky country it was probable that a spring would burst out of the hillside just at this point with sufficient volume to drive a turbine.

The nearer we approached the farm, the less likely became the probability of a mill, but we were convinced that we should find *something*, as in the case of Castle, so we boldly knocked at the door of the farm and waited. An elderly man came out to answer our questions, and took us into a shed built against the farmhouse.

There, sure enough, was something that undoubtedly appeared to be a large water-wheel. On closer inspection, we found that it was a man-power wheel that raises water from a well. By getting inside the wheel and walking uphill, a man could keep it turning slowly to raise a barrel of water some 180 feet.

I drew the wheel while Brown drew the water. He was pretty well blown by the time the barrel of water arrived, and I think I got the best of the deal. I think, moreover, the experience will have a good moral effect on Brown, who says now that he realizes what a poor sort of hobby working a treadmill must be. I have sketched the beam over one of the doors of this old house, which is built partly of hewn chalk. There are said to have been three wheels of this sort in England. One has just been demolished, and the other,



THE VANISHED MILL OF LOOSE

worked by a donkey, is at Carisbrooke Castle. Thus our friend at the farm believes that this water-wheel is the only one of its kind, *i.e.* worked entirely by man-power, that can be seen in this country.

The next mill on our programme was just outside Maidstone, by "The Running Horse." When it became visible on the left hand as the road dips down to cross the brook, we felt that this was more the style of thing we were after. However, we had again drawn a blank. True, there had once been a mill at this spot, but the mill-wheel was no more, and the mill house had been fitted up as a tiny church, an offshoot of Boxley. Nothing daunted, we pushed on into Maidstone, Brown cheerful and buoyed up by visions of multitudinous mills on the stream flowing from Loose. We knew at least of paper-mills in the neighbourhood, and the making of paper I have found is often associated with the weird and the picturesque, as the following yarn will show.

The Story of the City of Paper

By the merest chance one day, I found myself in an amazing place by the waters of Sittingbourne, not, as these sketches would seem to indicate, by the waters of Babylon, and became, perforce, a student of paper in a paper world. Life is full of surprises. I have roamed the streets of Baghdad and found squalor. I wait for a train at Sittingbourne and find an Arabian Nights entertainment.

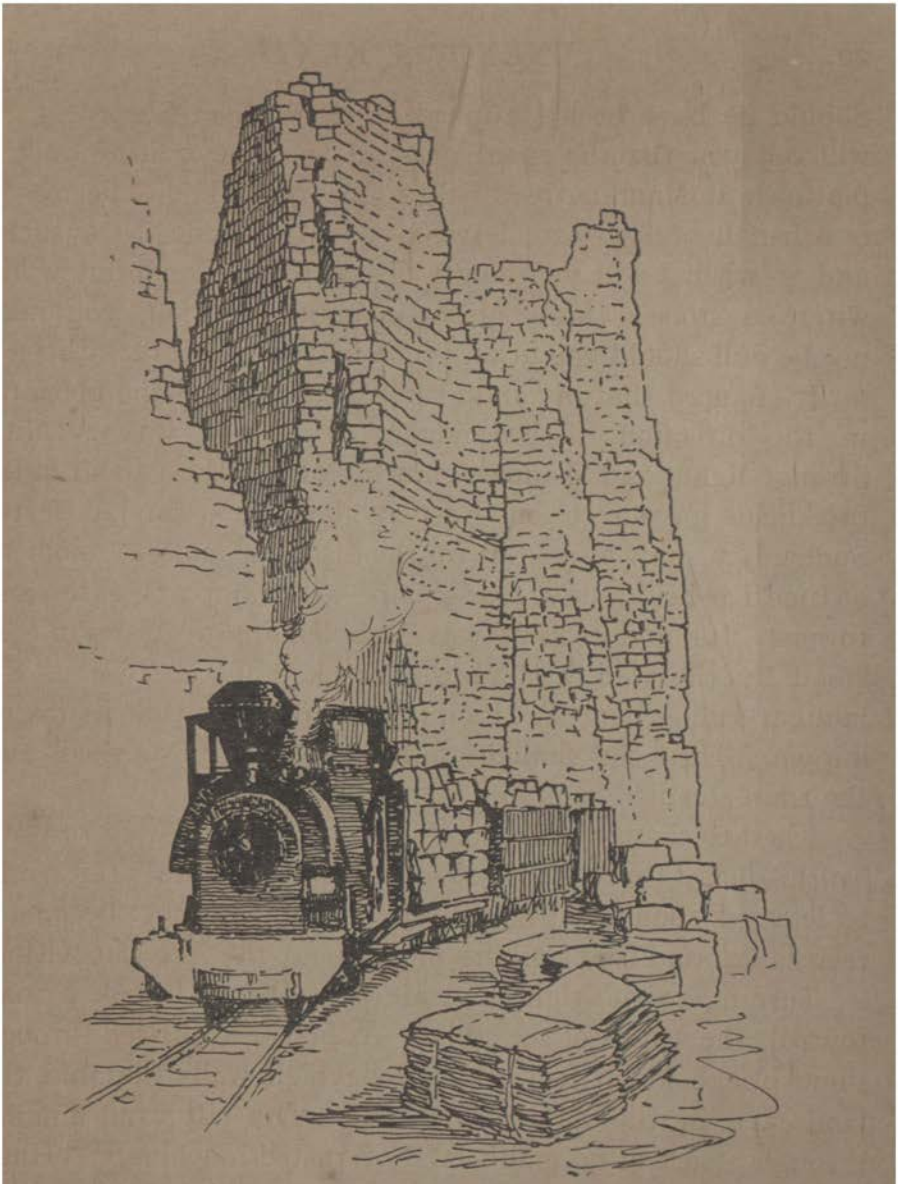
Ask any naval man what he did during the Great War.

Should he have been stationed at Harwich or Sheerness, he will tell you that he spent most of his time waiting on the platform at Manningtree or Sittingbourne. For some reason or other these places are destined to be the abode of travellers, and so when I tell you how I discovered a wonderful world within a stone's throw of Sittingbourne station, you need not be dull should you at any time find yourself stuck there.

It chanced that my train ran a little beyond the platform in the direction of Faversham. The time was evening. Strange lights and shadows glancing across the vapour-laden brickfields gave a curious Eastern glamour to the landscape. Suddenly a shaft of gold lit up the distance, and in a moment of time I beheld a city, four-square, with ramparts, gates, and towers. Its architecture was Babylonian or Assyrian. It stood by the waters of Milton Creek, and, because of the familiar sailing barges at its quays, I could see that it was no mirage. Then the sunlight failed. The city vanished, and the train steamed back into the station.

I had to change, and there was more than an hour to wait. To this delay I owe my discovery. Had my train been ready to leave, I should have proceeded on my journey, become a teetotaller, and said nothing more about the Assyrian vision.

Turning to the right, outside the station, I took a road towards the waters of the creek. At first the path led through some brickfields; then, under long high walls that hid the landscape in the direction of my dream city, and finally, through a sort of no-man's land of rusted machinery. Huge piles of what seemed to be masonry, some of it grey and some



THE PULP TRAIN.

of it white, rose up on all sides. Between these enormous masses led byways, and through a broader gorge, a sort of Grand Cañon of Colerado, a little engine puffed busily, hauling trucks loaded with square objects. On close inspection these proved to be either wood-pulp or masses of old newspapers compressed into cubes. Then I realized that all this seeming masonry was of the same material, wood-pulp or paper, and the glorious vision which had been conjured up in my imagination of a hitherto undiscovered Nineveh or Babylon in Kent, was gone.

Barges were unloading the paper or pulp. Trucks were carrying it away. Cranes were piling it into pyramids, and all the time, the busy mills were turning out thousands of miles of paper.

Rejoice and be glad, ye publishers and all printers! Of the making of many books there is no end.

***

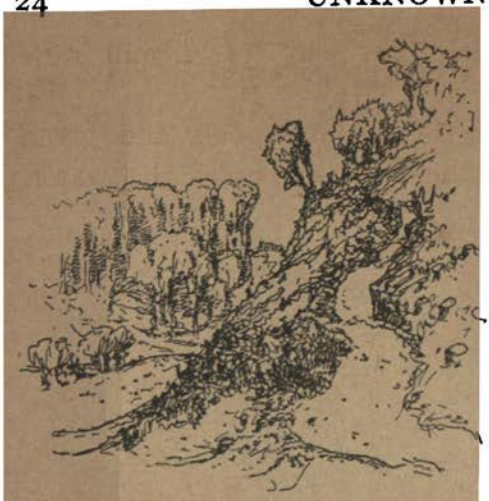
We boarded a tram labelled Loose, and descended into the valley which Brown had pronounced to be a valley of mills. The main road crosses the stream by a stone bridge at some height, and from this advantageous position we could see both up and down the valley. Down-stream we were looking upon a long sheet of water that looked like a mill-pond, but we could not see without a nearer view whether any of the buildings below it were mills or not. Up the valley on the other side we looked towards what appeared to be mills, and at our feet a skeleton or ghost of a mill. The mill had gone, but sluices, walls, and stonework foundations showed

clearly where it had been (sketch facing page 18). A passer-by informed us that it had once been a paper-mill.

"ITS ARCHITECTURE WAS BABYLONIAN OR ASSYRIAN."

"And now," said Brown, gazing somewhat reproachfully at the map which had so misled him, "it is only a mill on paper. But there are two more marked higher up."

We found these. One sketched (facing page 18)



WOODLAND PATH, LOOSE.

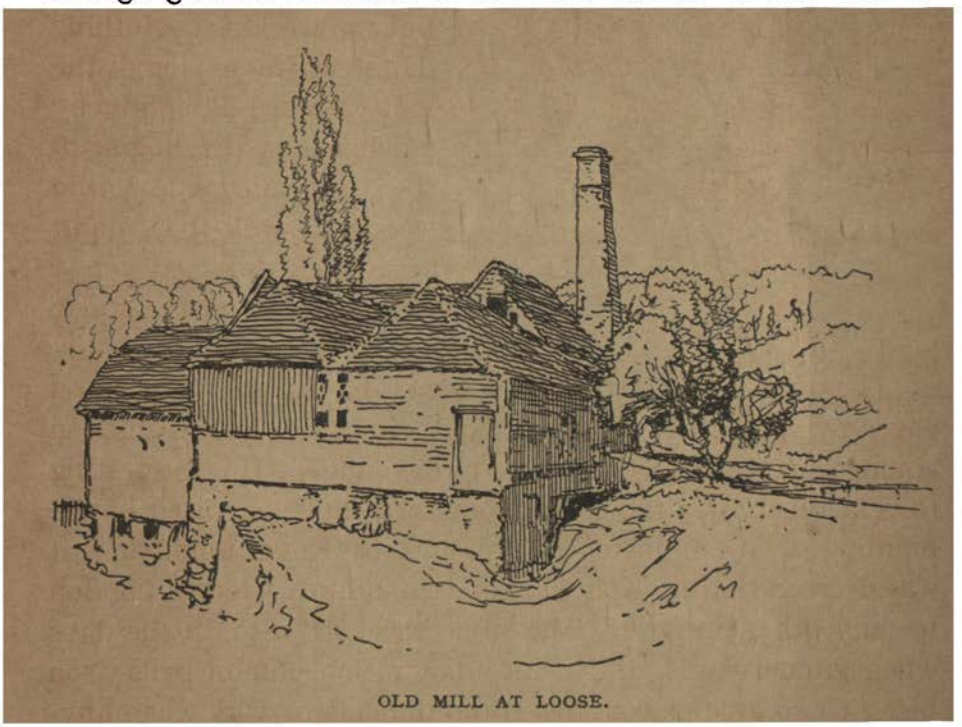
more or less a ruin, and the other, a black tarred structure, picturesque and complete with millpond, but not working. Nothing daunted, we explored the valley towards Boughton by a delightful path clinging to the steep valley side, a wild woodland walk that might have been designed for a pilgrims' way on the stage, but it led to no mills.

The quarries lie further on, a bit of one I have sketched on page 15, and two delightful old timbered houses hidden among the green in the steep dip of the valley. It is interesting to remember that the stone from these hills was used in the building of Westminster Abbey, and, by Royal Command, it was decreed that no Kentish stone should be carted to London for any other purpose. The stone was used also, in the days when gunnery was still in its infancy, for cannon balls, iron being too scarce or considered too difficult to work when anything heavy and hard would do as well.

We retraced our steps to Loose. The houses with little bridges crossing the streams to their doors (sketched 29) call to mind the quaint ways of Holland. Further down, where the stream takes a bend to the right, lies a millpond, but again we had drawn a blank, our sixth failure, for the

buildings below it are merely the site of a mill now defunct.

Loose is a pleasant place of old mill-pools and green cottage gardens reflected in the still surface of the water.



OLD MILL AT LOOSE.

There is a spring at the upper end of the village and the stream here is said to be the re-appearance of a lost stream from higher up the valley—hence according to some authorities the derivation of Loose—the water looses itself. I should have thought Found would have been more appropriate, but I am quite an amateur at these place-name problems.

We pushed on, lured by the prospect of a mill, which is one of the Seven Hopes of the sketcher.

The Seven Hopes of the Landscape Painter

A mill (windmill or water-mill)	A roof
A river	A ridge of hills
A tower	A wood
	A bridge

I do not mean that hundreds of good sketches cannot be found without these things. Yet in rambling about in search of material I have always found the anticipation of any of my Seven Hopes brightens the landscape possibilities. To begin with a mill. A windmill, apart from its inherent picturesqueness, is bound to stand in a place worth winning for its commanding position, and as to a watermill, why, the very fact that you know that yonder dip between the hills contains a watermill is enough to cheer you with all sorts of anticipations.

I loved the brimming wave that swam
Thro' quiet meadows round the mill,
The sleepy pool above the dam,
The pool beneath it never still,
The meal-sacks on the whiten'd floor,
The dark round of the dripping wheel,
The very air about the door
Made misty with the floating meal.*

The second hope, a river, needs no advocacy. How pointless often seems a valley in which no stream is visible. The silver glint of water makes interesting many a view that would

* Tennyson: *The Miller's Daughter.*

BOUGHTON QUARRIES

be monotonous without it. The same antidote to monotony is a tower. It enables you to touch uninteresting matter and transmute it into the purest gold.

> Straight mine eye hath caught new pleasures,
> Whilst the landskip round it measures;
> * * * * *
> Towers and battlements it sees
> Bosomed high in tufted trees.*

The fourth hope, a roof, often saves the situation. The straight lines of a gable among a writhing mass of green foliage, the pleasant russet of a great barn, or, since we are sketching in Kent, the quaint shape of an oasthouse.

The fifth hope, a ridge of hills, has the great property of welding together otherwise disunited elements. Mean little houses and straggling things can become significant under a steady skyline. The swelling curve of a hill will bring into unity a hundred trivialities so that they become, as it were, controlled instruments in an orchestra, instead of isolated ones playing different tunes in different keys.

The sixth hope, a wood, needs little explanation. The green mystery of foliage, the unexpected vistas and clearings, with their suggestion of infinity. And the seventh hope is a bridge, with its rhythmical repetition of arches. The springing curves of a big span, the shadow patterns on the ground or reflections in water make for interest and focus in many a pointless piece of country.

And here, now we are talking about sketching, I must tell

---

* Milton: *L'Allegro*.

you a story about an artist friend of mine, who started a summer sketching class. It is a sad story, but now that much time has elapsed even my friend, who was the victim in a dreadful tragedy, can see the funny side of it.

Finding a most picturesque farm with a tumble-down barn, the roof of which in its decrepit state was a subject of great variety of colour, he agreed to rent it from a farmer. The old barn with its roof studies in orange and madder and green was alone worth the money. Unfortunately, the farmer had a conscience and feeling that he had taken rather a lot of money for such a poor place determined to do his tenant well. On the day that the class assembled full of enthusiasm for studying old barns the finishing touches were being put to a new corrugated iron roof and every weed or piece of moss in the place ruthlessly removed.

My friend had said so much about the barn being just the thing for his sketching class that the good farmer imagined they were all going to work inside it.

The moral of this touching tale is that in some circumstances you should never speak the truth, not from any base motive, but because most people cannot understand it. Had my friend explained in detail that people were going to make serious studies and sketches of this barn of which the owner was heartily ashamed, no doubt the farmer would have refused to have anything to do with such a scheme of systematic lunacy.

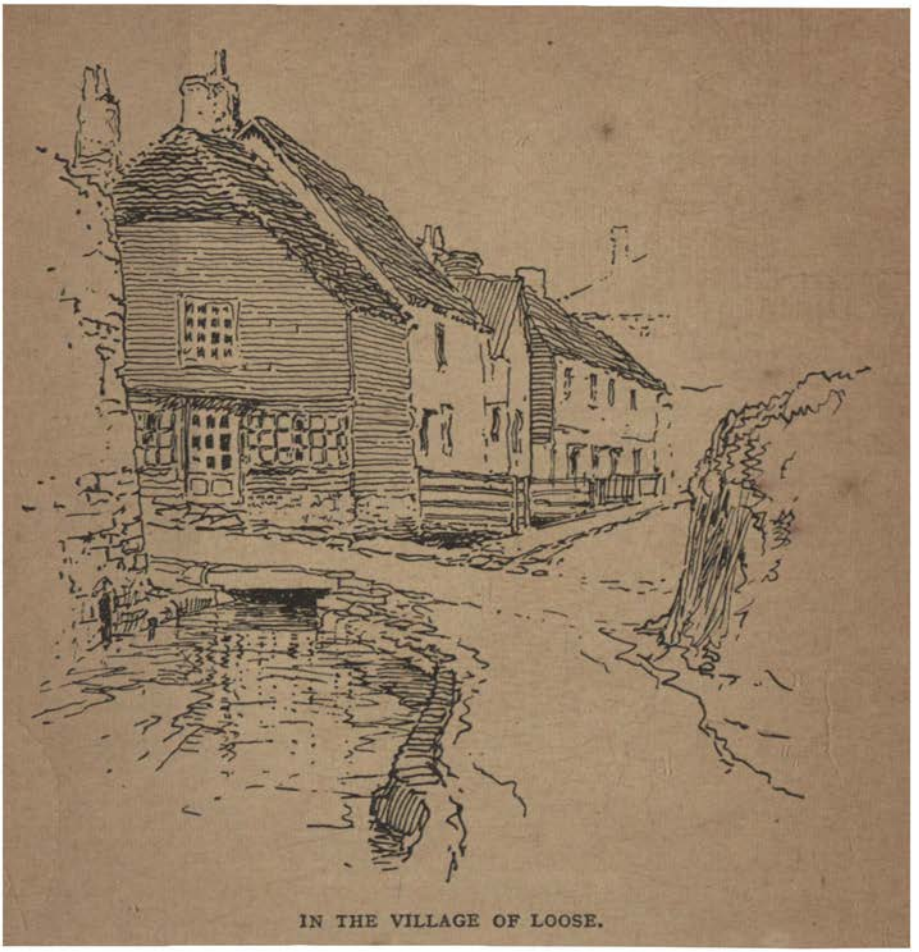
It was towards evening that our efforts were rewarded by

the sight and sound of what did undoubtedly seem to be a real, live, working mill. It stood across the narrow valley,

DISUSED WATER-MILL, TOVIL.

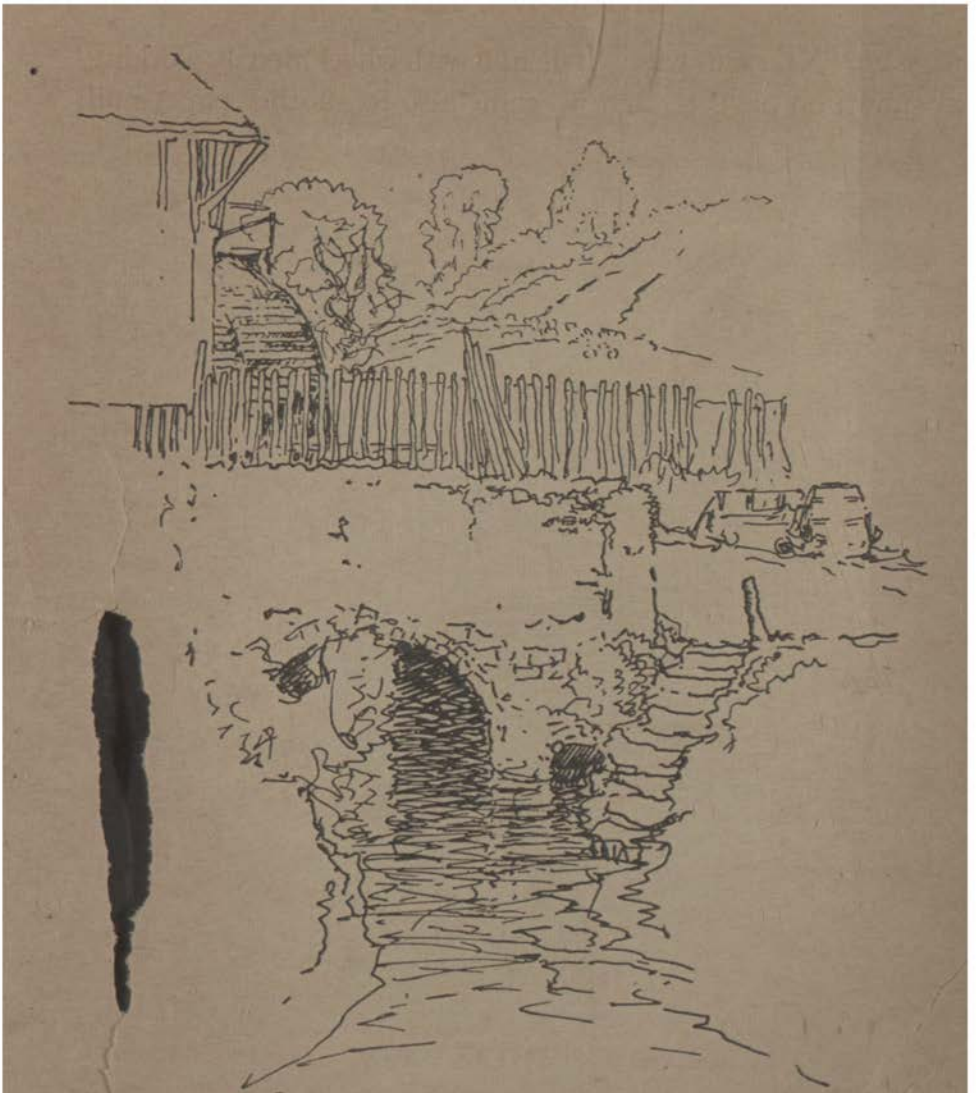
as sketched at the end of this chapter, and proved to be a paper-mill. Further on were two disused mills, one at Bockington and one at Tovil. I have sketched this last one on

page 29. Near this was a little mill with wheel merrily working, as shown on page 31, and we came also to another paper-mill.



IN THE VILLAGE OF LOOSE.

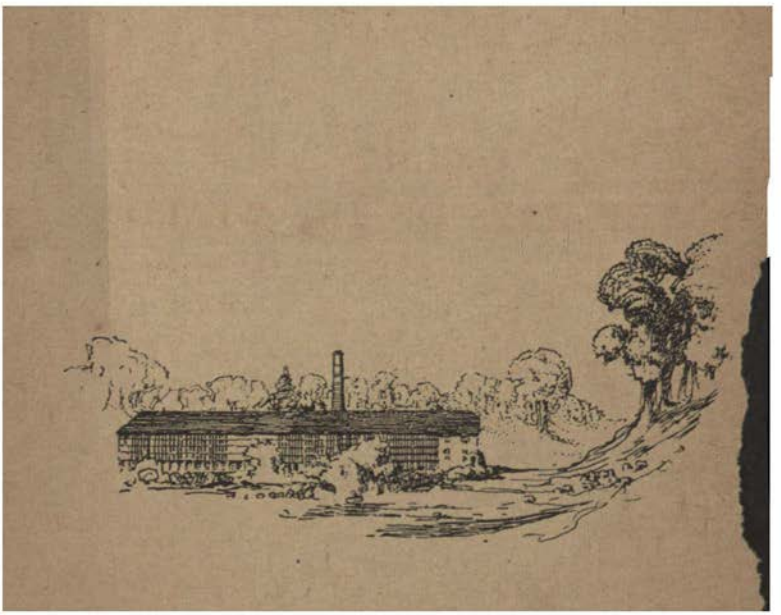
After seven blanks we had found the first working mill, and so our quest was over.



A WATER-WHEEL AT TOVIL.

Lector: But now you have found mills at Maidstone, are you not going to tell us something about them?

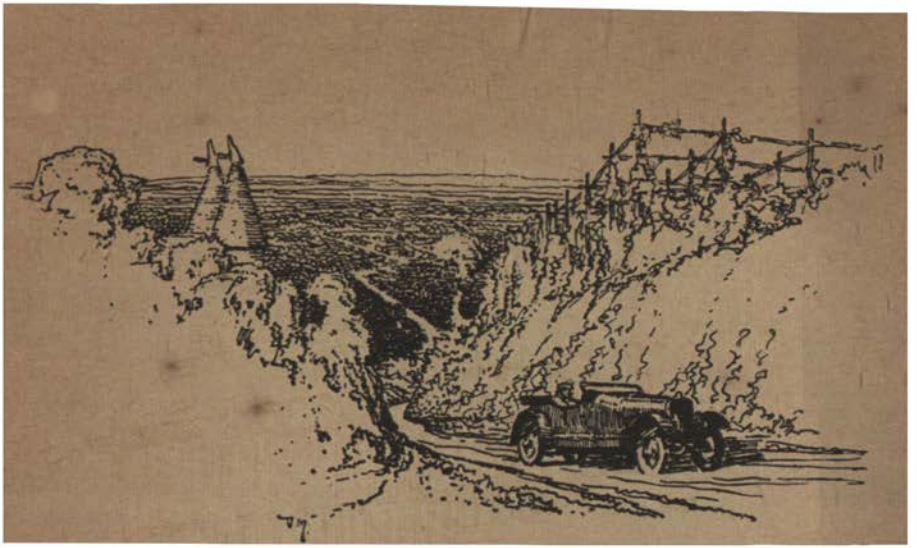
Pictor: No, certainly not. I am fed up with mills, and this is the story of the *quest* only, so I can end the chapter with a clear conscience and go to bed.



III

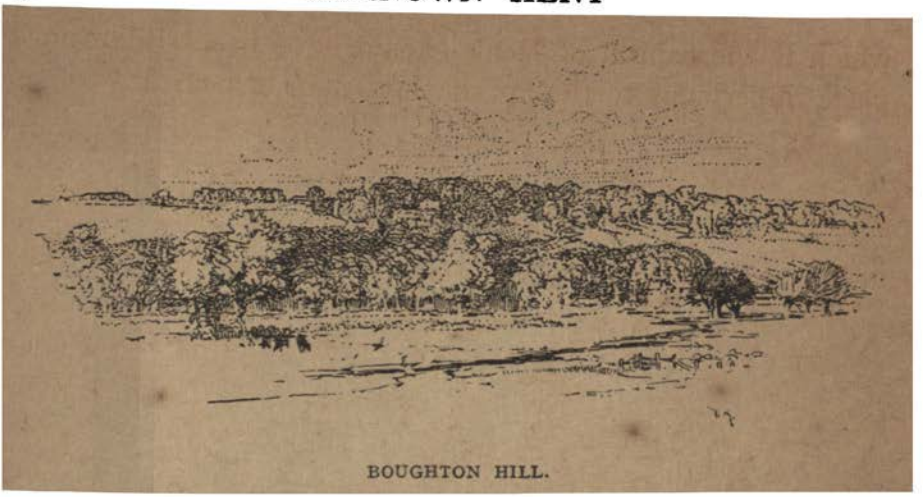
THE WAYS OF THE WEALD

A LITTLE SHOP WINDOW IN HEADCORN.



THE WAYS OF THE WEALD

THE Weald of Kent is the region, once thickly wooded and an almost impenetrable wild, lying between the ragstone ridge south of Maidstone and a line drawn from Ashurst to Dungeness, excluding the marshes within six or eight miles of the sea. This is only approximate, the exact limits of the Weald having been the subject of numerous lawsuits on the subject of tithe and the felling of timber. It has been contended that the Pilgrims' Way on the chalk hills of the North Downs is the northern limit. These are known as the White Hills, whereas the ragstone ridge are called the Red Hills. A celebrated case was fought out,



BOUGHTON HILL.

dragging on for a period of ten years, on the question of wood tithe. The Weald of Kent was exempt from a tithe on wood, and the crux of the whole case was whether a certain wood near Aylesford was within the boundaries of the Weald of Kent or not. If the Red Hills formed the boundary this wood did not come within the exempted area, and the Vicar of Aylesford was right in claiming tithe. The Vicar's counsel, addressing the jury, said—

"The Chalk Hills will enclose within the Weald the towns of Maidstone and Malling. Lord Stanhope, who professes great knowledge on the subject, says that the Weald means a Wild, and my learned friend, the Solicitor-General, who has been studying the Saxon language for the purpose of this cause, tells you that a Weald is nothing more or less than an immense wilderness, impervious to man or beast. If that is so, it is a very odd and extraordinary thing that Maidstone,

which is the capital of Kent, should have been situate in a place impervious to the approach of man or beast ! "

GOUDHURST.

Since this famous case the Red Hills have been regarded as the northernmost limit of the Weald.

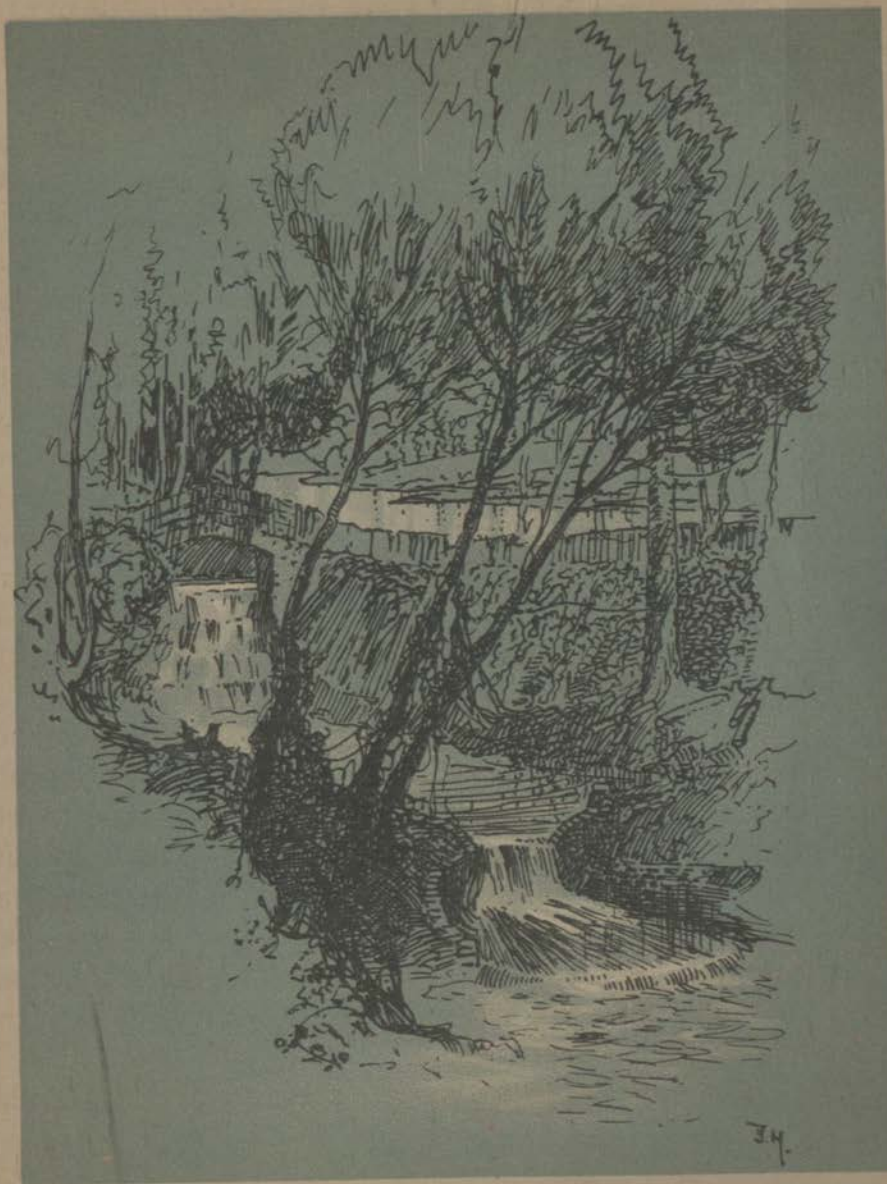
The fact that nearly all buildings in this forest region must have been of wood accounts for the scarcity of architectural traces of great age except in the churches. The nature

of the country, too, has been changed since the land has been cleared and brought into cultivation. We must remember that this was the iron country of the Elizabethan age.

It is probable that one day, if we are to trust the analogies of history, artists and poets will be rambling among the slag heaps of Sheffield or the waste places of Nuneaton, seeking inspiration. They will delight in the rich verdure of steep declivities. They will select picturesque "bits" suitable for the landscape of the Royal Academy of 3021 among the well-wooded vales, or write odes to nightingales in the solemn stillness of the forest glades. Perhaps some archæologist will remind them that these rural haunts were not designed to be holiday haunts, and the tumbled appearance of the primrose-covered banks was the result of man's work and not Nature's; that these woodlands were once regions of roaring industry, of furnace glare and belching smoke, of fierce labour disputes, of strikes, and the unceasing struggle between capital and labour.

Time was when the very heart of the Garden of England, the Weald of Kent, was (together with the adjacent Weald of Sussex) the black country of our land. The dense forests of this district yielded fuel for the furnaces. The iron-stone could be had for the asking on the surface (the numerous pits, now generally ponds, abound in a hundred unexpected places still), and charcoal was easily made. Thus the iron-masters flourished. It was coal, elsewhere, that was the death of the charcoal process.

The Romans worked iron in the great forest of Anderida,



THE FURNACE POND OF HORSMONDEN

A GLIMPSE OF A GARDEN AT YALDING.

which was their name for the Weald. Of Saxon ironworks we find no direct mention; but there is a good deal of indirect evidence that iron was produced here. In the Middle Ages we find various references to furnaces at work.

Agitation of various kinds was growing against the furnace owners. "In a few years," wrote Christopher Baker, "there will not be sufficient timber to build ships for Her Majesty's service." And Archbishop Parker writes in alarm to Elizabeth that Sir Richard Sackville was about to build more ironworks in Westwell, Kent, and he refers to the advance of the industry

as a "*plague* which if it shall come into the country, I fear it will breed much grudge and desolation." At this time there were "ten owners, six forges, and eight furnaces in the Weald of Kent."

There is a note somewhat of modern industrialism in Camden's account of the Weald.

"It is full of iron mines," he writes, "for the casting of which there are furnaces up and down the country, and abundance of wood is yearly spent; many streams are drawn into one channel, and a great deal of meadow ground is turned into ponds and pools for the driving of mills by the flashes which, beating with hammers upon the iron, fill the neighbourhood round about, night and day, with continued noise. The proprietors of the mines, by casting of cannon and other things, make them turn to good account. But whether the nation is in any way advantaged by them, is a doubt which the next age will be better able to resolve."

Facing this page I have tried to reconstruct an old-time iron-works with its water-power for the bellows and crude machinery. It stands below a hammer pond in a clearing, and in my sketch, which was arrived at after some thought, I think you will find some sort of idea of the black country of the Elizabethan era.

In hidden-away places, often among thick trees, can be found the old hammer ponds or furnace ponds that supplied the water-power for the crude machinery of those days, in the infancy of iron. The largest of these, and one of the most picturesquely situated, is the furnace pond at Horsmonden.

AN ELIZABETHAN IRON FOUNDRY IN THE WEALD

Facing page 38 I have sketched the site of the long-vanished iron-mills below the high-banked lake. A tumbling fall with pools and brick-built basins makes a pleasant noise of waters in the little wood. In the dim light I can almost see a ghostly

A QUAINT SKY-LINE IN THE WEALD.

mill where the shades of the old ironmasters of Kent still watch their men fashioning ordnance for the defence of the realm against the King of Spain.

This reminds me, too, that there were profiteers in those days. Cannon was sold to foreign ships, and it is said that

some of those used against us by the Great Armada were cast in Kent.

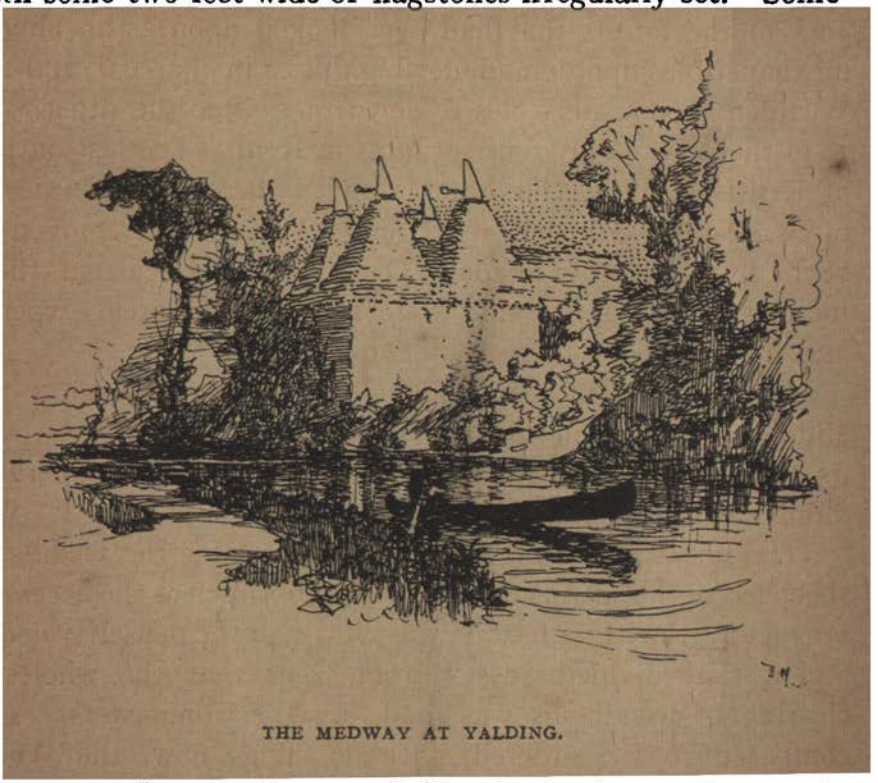
The iron trade of the Weald reached its most prosperous days at the close of Elizabeth's reign. The gradual disappearance of the forests that had been looked upon as an almost inexhaustible supply, made for high price in charcoal, and the Wealden ironmasters closed down one after the other. In 1740 there were only four furnaces in Kent. The last output of Kentish iron was at Lamberhurst, where the old railings of St. Paul's Cathedral were cast. These were removed in 1870 and sent to Canada. The ship which carried them foundered, but a few that were recovered at great expense and trouble are to be seen in Toronto.

Another industry that made the Weald famous in the Middle Ages was the making of broadcloth. Cranbrook and its surrounding townships had become places of considerable industrial importance.

The necessity of large areas of pasture for the feeding of sheep led to the cutting down of forests as much as the necessity for fuel for the furnaces. It was chiefly in the densely wooded region that divided Sussex from Kent that the wholesale clearing of woodlands was made by the ironmasters. Yet, compared to the ordered state of things now, the Weald must have been in a large measure an impenetrable wild, through which certain tracks—they could hardly be called roads—had been made.

Pack-horses in large numbers, roped together like caravans of camels in the East, were the main users of the roads for

commerce, and oxen for heavy goods. The frequency of the Woolpack as the name of an Inn still speaks of those days. Sometimes a paved way can be found, as at Biddenden, a path some two feet wide of flagstones irregularly set. Some-



THE MEDWAY AT YALDING.

times a sunken track, a veritable ghost of a road, may be traced still, though abandoned and overgrown, in the depths of a wood or wandering up hill and down dale without reference to the roads of to-day.

We get glimpses of the appalling state of things in the

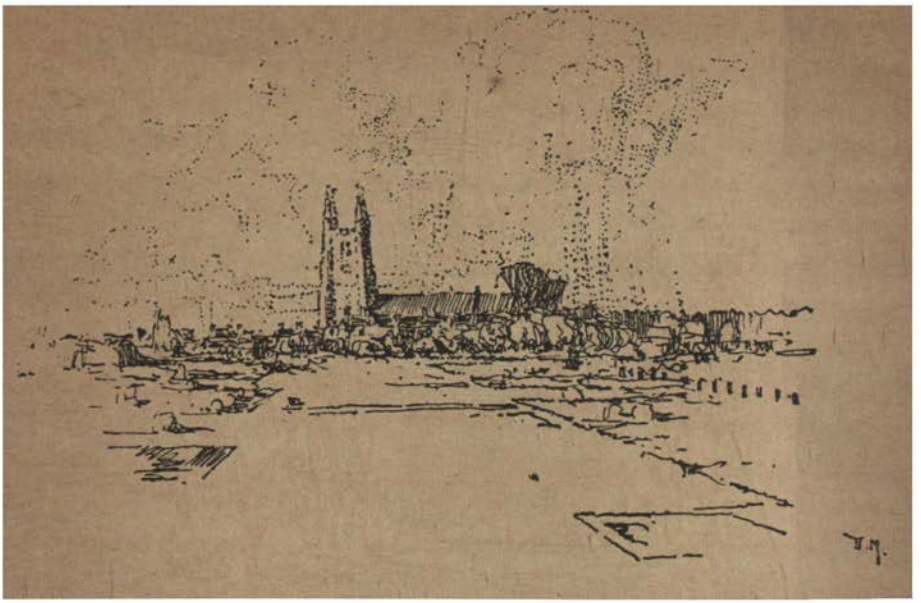
winter in various chronicles: horses up to their girths and coaches drawn into comparative safety by six yoke of oxen!

I have seen in Hungary and in some of the thickly wooded valleys of the Lebanon in Syria, almost exactly the sort of thing the Weald of Kent must have been like in those days—a tangled mass of featureless forest growth through which paths have been cleared for pack-horses, and, in the latter case, mules and camels.

IV

THE RIDDLE OF TENTERDEN TOWER

APPLEDORE CHURCH.



THE RIDDLE OF TENTERDEN TOWER

GREAT play has been made in the days of our forefathers in ridiculing the superstitious belief of many that a famous steeple in the Weald of Kent caused the Haven of Sandwich to silt up. Yet so deep-rooted was the belief among the people of Sandwich in the reign of Henry VIII. of Tenterden Tower bringing evil days upon them that inquiry was made in all seriousness by no less a person than Sir Thomas More to try and get at the substance and origin of the fable. A commission was sitting to collect evidence

as to the causes of the decay of Sandwich port. In his *Dialogues* More recounts how after many witnesses a very old man arose and said—

"Ye maysters, say every man what he wyll, cha marked this matter as well as sum other, and I wote how it waxed naughte well ynoughe; for I knewe good, I have marked, so chave when it began to wax wors."

"And what hath hurt it, good father?" quod those gentlemen.

"By my fayth, Maysters," quod he, "yonder same Tenterden Stepell, and nothing ellys, that, by the Masse, sholde 'twere a fayre fyshpole."

"Why hath the stepell hurt the haven, good father?" quod they.

"Nay, by'r Lady, Maysters," quod he, "yeh cannot tele you well why, but chote well yt hath; for I knew that a good haven tyll the stepell was bylded, and by the Mary masse, cha marked yt never throve synnys."

ISLE OF OXNEY AND SEA APPROACHES IN THE MIDDLE AGES.

Tenterden lies in the Weald five leagues from the sea, and it is difficult indeed to find any connection between the misfortunes of the port of Sandwich and this stately tower.

Explanations, how-

ISLE OF OXNEY FROM THE MARSHES AT APPLEDORE.

ever, of the inner meaning of the fable have not been wanting. Like the story of the geese that saved the Capitol, invented by some ingenious person to justify a ritual the origin of which had been lost, so fertile minds have devised all sorts of feasible readings of the riddle of Tenterden.

One story is that this tower, built in 1461, replaced an earlier structure fashioned by Earl Godwin, who became so enthusiastic about its construction that he fetched stones for it that should have maintained his sea wall, from Thanet, consequently losing part of his estate, which became the Goodwin Sands. A most improbable thing, to begin with, bringing stones from Thanet, which is a chalk country, to the Weald, which abounds in stone. Another yarn, which bears some family likeness to the above, is that a sum of money in the hands of the Bishops of Rochester for the purpose of maintaining the sea walls in Thanet was used for the building of Tenterden Tower to the detriment of the East Kent marshes, which became flooded.

Both these explanations are rendered particularly ludicrous because they explain away the wrong thing. The old fable

was that Tenterden steeple *caused the silting up of Sandwich Haven*, as the old doggerel tells us—

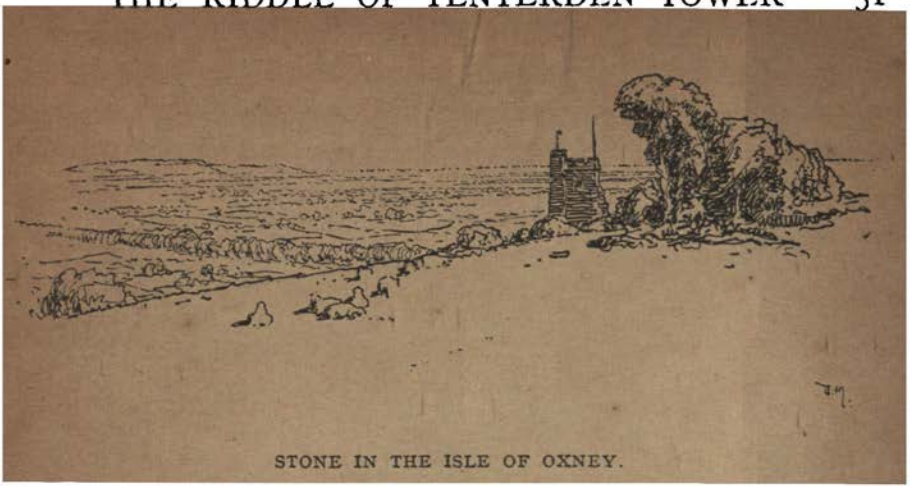
> Of many people it hath been sayed
> That Tenterden steeple Sandwich haven hath decayed.

and was *not the cause of the Goodwin Sands*. The Goodwin Sands were dragged in by Hugh Latimer when using this old saying as an illustration. He was preaching before Edward VI., and he slightly misquoted More either accidentally or intentionally to heighten his effect.

Now it happened not long ago, when I was bent on exploring the Isle of Oxney, I stumbled, almost by accident, against evidence which revealed to me some possible connection between Tenterden and Sandwich. It has often been my good fortune when rambling with my sketch-book to make notes of places and things which have had in them more than I knew. In this case I scribbled a sketch which revealed to me in the twinkling of an eye the solution of the age-long riddle of Tenterden Tower. I will tell you how it happened.

Appledore is just the quaint, old-world, old-fashioned place that its name suggests, on the fringe of the great expanse of the Romney Marsh, by the tree-bordered canal that leads from Hythe to the waters of the Rother by old Rye. The village is about a mile from the station, where I landed from Ashford at 8.30 in the morning. Across the level land and beyond the green procession of foliage along the Royal Military Canal, a relic of the invasion menace of the Napoleonic

THE MARSHES FROM OXNEY ISLAND

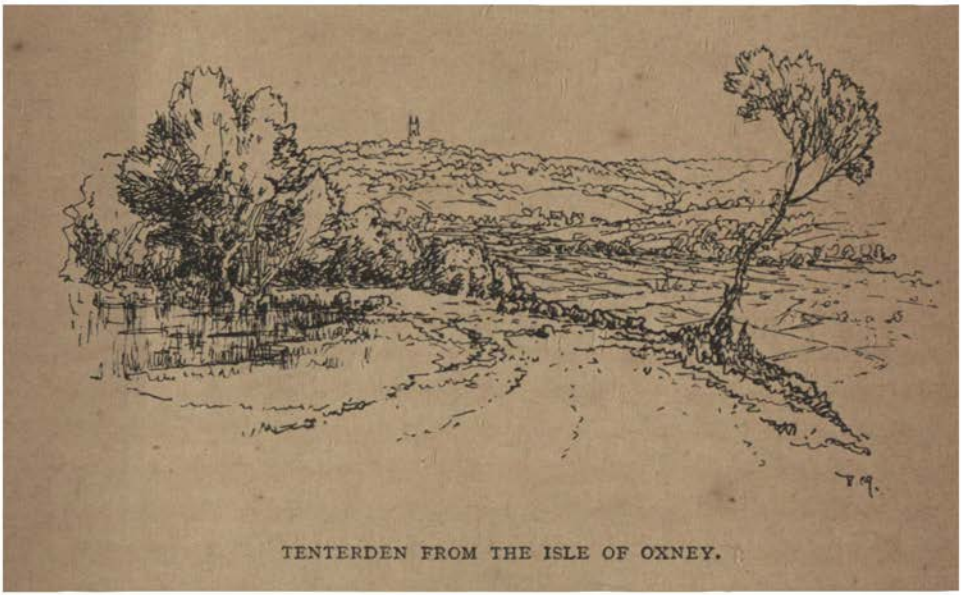


STONE IN THE ISLE OF OXNEY.

days, rose the headland of Stone cliff, the eastern end of the Isle of Oxney. I remembered as I marched along that a few centuries previously a traveller in this spot would have been upon the sea nearing land by Appledore and Ham Street. On his port beam would be Rye. The sea would divide at Oxney, which would have stood very much like Warden Point in Sheppey, one estuary running up the Rother valley and the other encircling the island by way of Small Hythe, joining the main waters again below Rolvenden. The little sketch-map here reproduced will give a rough idea of the coastline—the waters by Hayling Island to-day being almost an exact parallel to these estuaries and creeks as they were in the Middle Ages.

I gained the island and climbed the steep ascent, some two hundred feet, at Stone, and stood overlooking the great flat plain. I have sketched it here, not as it was on this

occasion, but as I found it later when evening fell and the old-time sea, now marshland, intersected with a gleaming network of ditches, stretched its gloomy length from Rye to Lympne. The dark trees of the canal led the eye to the headland by Playden, where the Rother glittered in light,



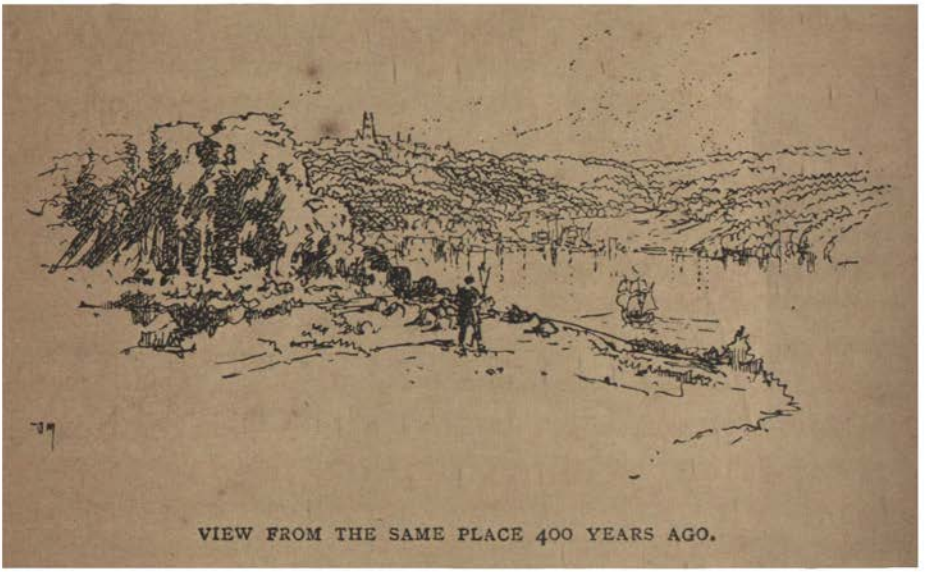
TENTERDEN FROM THE ISLE OF OXNEY.

and away to the south a misty brightness seemed to show the sea.

Walking along the crown of the hill I came first to a long cleft in the ground running east and west, not unlike an irregular railway cutting in parts, the result, I imagine, of a landslide where the descent is very steep hard by. A little further on I was surprised to find a pond. It was on the very highest part of the crest. From near this place I could

see the great stretch of marshland mile upon mile in the direction of Lympne, the tree-bordered canal creeping like a great green caterpillar across the level meadows and the tower of Stone Church half hidden by trees and the falling land.

Then as I walked towards Wittersham I came upon a feature



VIEW FROM THE SAME PLACE 400 YEARS AGO.

which I found an amazing thing, but which the inhabitants did not seem to think worthy of notice, a chain of ponds like the one I had seen *at the summit of the rising ridge.* I counted no less than nineteen in the three miles between Stone and Wittersham. Some were open pools, some rush-bordered marshes, some little lakes in the woodlands with banks clustered thickly with bluebells, violets, primroses.

Such a thing is familiarity that I could not get up any

local interest among the natives concerning their strange position. Several men I questioned seemed to think that the summit of hills was the proper place for ponds, not hollows. I suppose some tilted stratum of rock forces water to this high position, and the clay surface does not readily allow it to soak away. Perhaps some geological reader will enlighten me.

Near one of these pools, where the land begins to fall away to the marsh some two hundred feet below, I could see the Tower of Tenterden crowning a wooded hill. To the right was a tongue of level green running up between hilly banks on the way to Small Hythe. I have sketched the scene on page 52. Now the name Small Hythe is a reminder that this place once stood upon a branch of the Rother estuary, and four hundred years or so ago was a shipbuilding place for Hythe further down and for Rye across the water. The place where the road crosses a ditch is still called the Ferry.

Burnt down in 1514, the busy quays and warehouses of Small Hythe were never rebuilt, and the place possesses now only a few small houses, one, a rambling timbered structure belonging to Miss Ellen Terry, speaks eloquently of the glory that has departed. You can see on the sketch-map how this place is situated with regard to Tenterden. It was the port and harbour of the town, and the creek that ran up to within quite a short distance of Tenterden was a place of shipyards and docks.

I thought as I sketched in the level meadows that I must

HALF-TIMBERED HOUSE
IN TENTERDEN.

succeed in making them look *flat* in contrast to the rolling country enclosing them, as one day this was not *grass* but *water*, an arm of the sea bearing ships to fetch wool and iron from the Weald. Fancy even led me to dream a dream and sketch the place again, not as it was now, but as it would have been when Sandwich Haven was beginning to silt up (page 53). What a fine lead Tenterden Tower with its beacon flare at night! What an easy harbour compared to difficult Sandwich, and with cargoes, too, richer than that ancient port could provide!

Tenterden had grown up rapidly owing chiefly to the wool trade. Refugees from Flanders had set up looms and the broadcloth of Kent had world-wide fame. The amount of smuggling in wool was enormous, and huge profits were made by shipowners trading with the Continent. In spite of vigilance and Acts of Parliament to the effect that wool must not be exported without special licence this illicit trade—free trade as it was then called—grew and grew. A ship with a few kegs of brandy and a few bales of silk snugly landed could always double her profits by returning with a few bales of wool.

So here is, perhaps, light on the riddle of long ago: Sandwich becoming more and more difficult: the Weald, with its wool and splendid prospect of profiteering, to say nothing of the undoubted blessings to the shipowner of "free trade," smuggling: a beacon tower, seen from far, and a safe road. There is a north-easter blowing, and the light is failing. Can you not hear the master exclaim—

AT THE WOOLPACK INN, TENTERDEN.

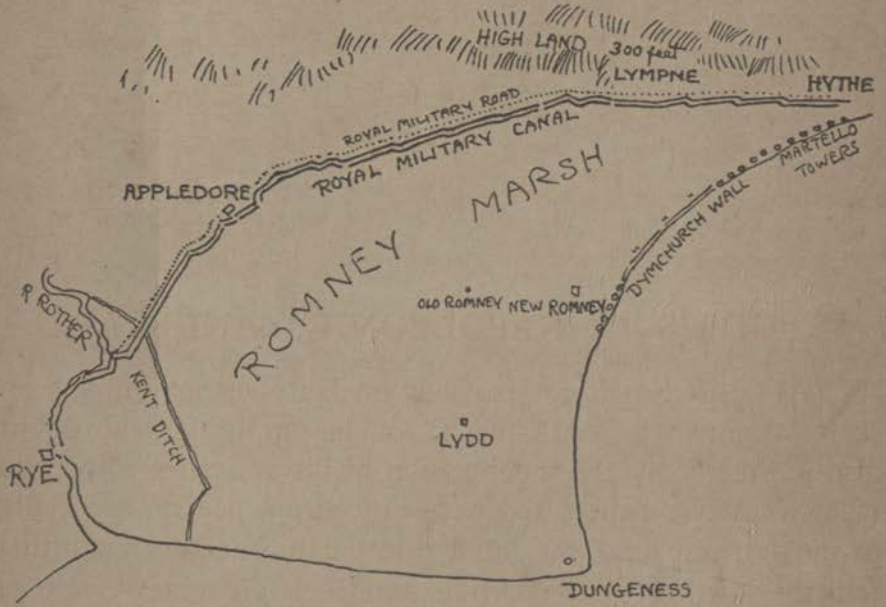
"By the Masse, let us make Tenterden Stepell and nothyng ellys?"

And so the Haven of Sandwich went from bad to worse.

THE ROYAL MILITARY CANAL.

V

STUDIES IN NAPOLEONIC LANDSCAPE


HIGH LAND
300 feet
LYMPNE
HYTHE
ROYAL MILITARY ROAD
ROYAL MILITARY CANAL
APPLEDORE
ROMNEY MARSH
MARTELLO TOWERS
DYMCHURCH WALL
R ROTHER
OLD ROMNEY
NEW ROMNEY
KENT DITCH
LYDD
RYE
DUNGENESS

STUDIES IN NAPOLEONIC LANDSCAPE

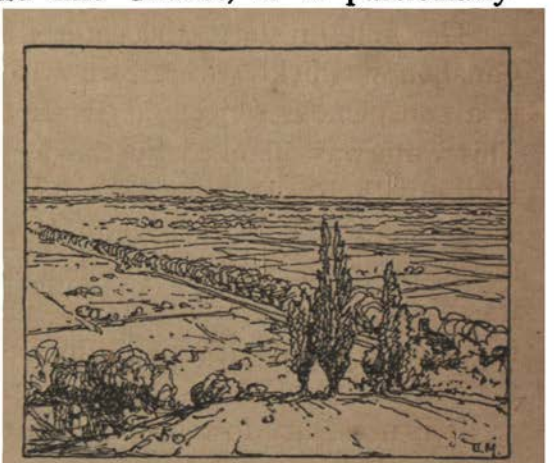
NAPOLEON left his mark upon Europe, not only as an immediate consequence of his military genius, but also indirectly by the repercussion of his activities. Regions where he never penetrated were braced up, poetry, especially of the patriotic kind, was kindled into flame, and even painting felt the stirring of the nation and took on a new lease of life. The very landscape of our coast is in parts still eloquent of those days of expected invasion, when nursemaids quieted refractory children with threats of Boney and when the old roads of the Romans from inland to the sea resounded with the clatter of horsemen and the tramp of the men of Kent.

Stand upon the high land overlooking the vast track of Romney Marsh, and you will observe, as your eye travels

MARTELLO TOWERS NEAR HYTHE.

over mile after mile of the green plain bordered by the sea, two curious features. One is an interminable procession of thick trees, making a monster caterpillar, from Hythe by Appledore to Rye, in long straight lengths with an occasional kink as if the creature was creeping with difficulty across the land dragging his huge length along toward the Rother. From the headland at Stone in Oxney, which was once an island like Thanet, it is particularly striking.

The other feature is the strange appearance of the coast-line, which is studded with innumerable little turrets. These explain themselves after a moment's consideration. It is clear that they are some sort of defences to command the beach. They are, in fact, the famous



THE ROYAL MILITARY CANAL FROM THE HIGH LAND OF THE ISLE OF OXNEY.

LYMPNE AND ROMNEY MARSH.

Martello towers, part of Pitt's plan of countering a landing in this region.

The first mystery, the caterpillar, is the Royal Military Canal, now thickly overgrown with stately trees that make it a conspicuous object, as it stretches across the marshes. This waterway, flanked by the Royal Military Road, joined Hythe with Rye, making Romney Marsh an island, and the second line of defence, should Napoleon succeed in flinging his army on the beach and silencing the coast batteries. It was also useful for transport of guns and munitions. Every few hundred yards there is a kink and a blockhouse commanding the reach.

It is necessary to remember that Dungeness is the nearest point to France, and Napoleon with the *Grande Armée*, and multitudinous gunboats and transports, was encamped at

Boulogne before this scheme of repelling an invasion had been completed. In the *Kentish Gazette* of Sept. 11, 1804, the following paragraph appeared :—

"On Thursday last Mr. Pitt, accompanied by Generals Twiss and Moore, met the Lords and Bailiffs of the Level of Romney Marsh, at Newhall near Dymchurch, to consider of the best mode of inundating the Marsh in case of invasion, when it was determined that, on the appearance of the enemy on the coast, the sluices should be opened to admit the sea so as to fill the dykes, which might be accomplished in one tide, and in case of actual invasion remain open another tide, which would be sufficient to inundate the whole level."

This scheme of defence, the forts, the canal, and the flooding of the marshes, although quite sound for the military conditions of those days, was received with the usual scepticism and ridicule which Englishmen, especially those imbued with the conservatism of rural places, are prone to indulge in. One retired army officer was so incensed that he wrote to the *Times* offering as an effective substitute, and at considerably less expense to the country, to put his own cocked hat on a stick by way of protecting our sacred shores and striking terror in the breasts of all potential foes.

As for the scheme of flooding the marshes, it is interesting to note that the level of the land is so much below the sea at high tide in places, that were it not for Dymchurch wall, the steep land at Lympne would be still washed by the waves as when the Romans came, and be something like seven or eight feet deep in spring tides.

THE HILL COUNTRY NEAR HYTHE.

A century has passed and Napoleon's threat of invasion is almost forgotten, or only likely to be revived as part of the centenary remembrances of his death. From the heights of Lympne, with its broad prospect of land and sea—

> Where Grisnez winks at Dungeness,
> Across the narrow strip of salt,

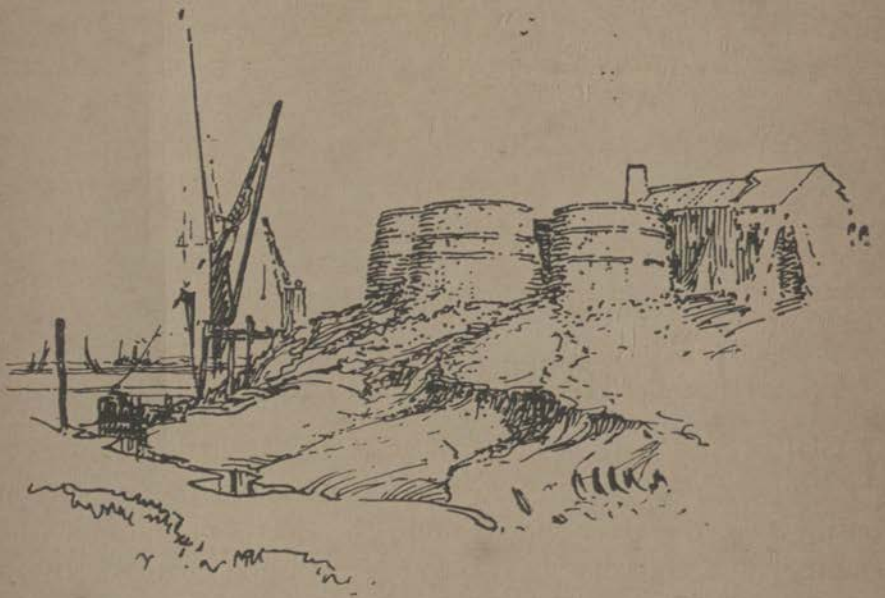
our Premier and the French President have met in friendly discussion of their mutual interests.

Shade of Pitt! What revenge does time bring. It would have seemed to the patriot of a hundred years ago as mad as the prospect to-day of an Anglo-Prussian alliance against France.

ROMAN WALLS NEAR LYMPNE.

VI

THAMES-SIDE KENT



CLIFFE CREEK.

THE "WORCESTER" AT GREENHITHE.

THAMES-SIDE KENT

I SUPPOSE there is no part of Kent so little known to those whose lawful occasions do not take them there on business as the river-shore, along the northern limit of the county and the marshes below Gravesend backed by a ridge of hill that divides the Thames from the Medway. Of this last tract of country, known as the Hundred of Hoo, no one seems to have a good word to say. The old rhyme gave the dog a bad name—

> **He that rideth in the Hundred of Hoo**
> **Besides pilfering Seamen shall find dirt enow.**

And writers since have stuck to it. Mr. Walter Jerrold, in his *Highways and Byways in Kent*, dismisses the whole

region in a page and a half, though he allows that "there is much pleasant country to be seen in the wooded hills and cornlands stretching across the central part of the peninsula and a charm in the broad marshes going down to the river." He says "the villages have not much to detain us except that of Cooling." Another Kentish topographer, Mr. Charles Cox, in his *Rambles in Kent*, speaks of the Hundred of Hoo as having "no claim to be picturesque or attractive." "Probably," he writes, "this dreary peninsula is the least visited of any part of Kent, and the rambler *is advised to shun it* unless he is a church-lover." Guide-books, as far as I can remember, are equally contemptuous.

My attention was first called to this part of the world by the delightful scenes in *Great Expectations*. For inspiration to a landscape painter it would be difficult to find anything more suggestive than some of Dickens's word-pictures.

"Ours was the marsh country down by the river, within, as the river wound, twenty miles of the sea. My first most vivid and broad impression of the identity of things, seems to me to have been gained on a memorable raw afternoon towards evening. At such a time I found out for certain, . . . that the dark flat wilderness beyond the churchyard, intersected with dykes and mounds and gates, with scattered cattle feeding upon it, was the marshes; and that the low leaden line beyond was the river; and that the distant savage lair from which the wind was rushing was the sea."

Here is another one—

"The marshes were just a long black horizontal line then,

"OURS WAS THE MARSH COUNTRY DOWN BY THE RIVER."
"GREAT EXPECTATIONS."

as I stopped to look after him ; and the river was just another horizontal line, not nearly so broad nor yet so black ; and the sky was just a row of long angry red lines and dense black lines intermixed. On the edge of the river I could faintly make out the only two black things in all the prospect that seemed to be standing upright ; one of these was the beacon by which the sailors steered—like an unhooped cask upon a pole—an ugly thing when you were near it ; the other a gibbet, with some chains hanging to it which had once held a pirate.

"It was pleasant and quiet there, with the sails on the river passing beyond the earthwork, and sometimes when

the tide was low, looking as if they belonged to sunken ships that were still sailing on at the bottom of the water."

"It was like my own marsh country, flat and monotonous, and with a dim horizon; while the winding river turned and turned, and the great floating buoys turned and turned, and everything else seemed stranded and still."

These and many other equally effective glimpses of an unknown country fired my imagination many years ago, and, before I came to live in the Medway country, I often rambled about that Thames marshland. I remember landing in a sailing-boat at Cliffe Creek, where there were some curious ruins of long-ago disused kilns. Here is a sketch of them. I struck inland to make Rochester, when on the way I beheld an amazing thing—a crater in Kent.

Now I was going down to the sea in a ship, and it is given to such people to see the wonders of the deep and a few extras on land thrown in, so I ought not to have been particularly astonished. I will recount the tale, however, for it seemed to me worth remembering.

The New Geology, or The Story of a Crater in Kent

One summer afternoon, when the tide had turned against her and when the wind had died down to an almost imperceptible stirring of the air, a small sailing craft dropped anchor off the creek at Cliffe. Her captain and crew, with cheery optimism, had given Rochester as their next address, so it

A ROAD OUT OF CLIFFE.

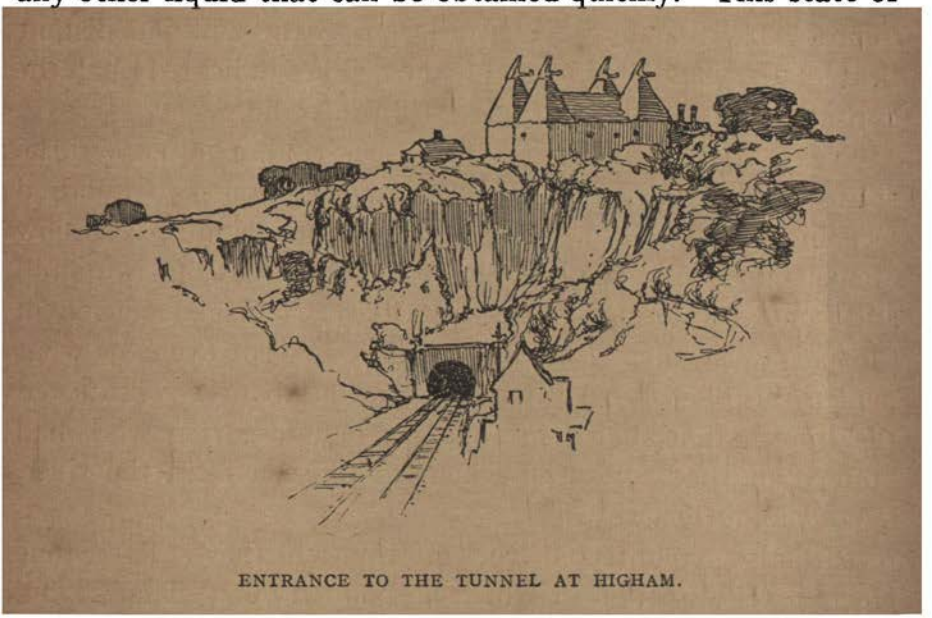
was decided that an expedition for the purpose of fetching letters should be fitted out.

I volunteered to be the expedition. Sketch-book in hand, I started on a ramble which had Rochester as a distant objective, chancing such finds as the landscape of the land could afford. The marshes seemed asleep and the dull and distant beat of the paddle of some steamer alone indicated that the activities of time and tide were still proceeding.

Near Higham I left the marshes and came upon the rising ground towards Great Hermitage, some two hundred feet higher, with broad prospects of the distant river now almost invisible in the haze, led on by the sight of a windmill and some mysterious monument like a damaged edition of Cleopatra's needle. I could not find out what event or what person this obelisk stood for, but a farm labourer volunteered the information that some one, he had forgotten who, had built it, he had forgotten when, to be seen from the river, he had forgotten why.

He also volunteered the information that "The Stone Horse," the direction of which he pointed out ("Thank you, sir. It *is* very thirsty weather"), was the departure point for the road into Strood. I thought I would get better acquainted with "The Stone Horse" and see if I could get the landlady to make me some tea. This, remember, was before the days when it was considered necessary for the defence of the realm to force travellers in country places to wait till six o'clock for a drink, however hot the weather, for the practical effect at most inns of closing the bar in the afternoon

is a general exodus of everybody connected with the place, so that the pleasant amenities of tea are no more. At six o'clock it is too late for tea, and by that time the traveller is so thirsty that he will drink the place dry on beer or any other liquid that can be obtained quickly. This state of



ENTRANCE TO THE TUNNEL AT HIGHAM.

things is supposed by innumerable simple and well-meaning people to promote temperance.

I struck across some fields, dipping down towards a little wood of young larches. The place was quiet and seemed out of the world. The ridge of Great Hermitage hid the region of the Thames, although an occasionally long-drawn note of a siren, distant and attenuated, still told of ships on their way to London. I looked back as I walked, and a little to

my left beheld an amazing thing—a crater! The little larch wood, I saw, overtopped a precipitous descent from the depths of which rose wreaths of smoke slowly dissipating themselves in the air as they ascended. Then an ominous rumble. Wonders unceasing, I was just in time for the eruption. The ground trembled, the roar grew louder and then died away suddenly as a column of white steam appeared like a cloud escaping from the nether regions.

A closer inspection revealed the fact that I was looking down into the railway tunnel of the line between Higham and Strood at a point where there is an opening. It is a place with a curious history. I had, indeed, lost my crater, but instead I found a ghost—the ghost of a dead canal.

Time was, before the railway had come to kill them, that canals were used for the transport of heavy goods all over England. There are few places that are far removed from shipping and the coast that have not some waterway, linking it up with river and sea. Many of these ways are now derelict or disused, as the Wey-Arun Canal or the Royal Military Canal of Romney Marsh. Had not the introduction of railways checked the activities of the canals no doubt there would have developed a much more connected system of inland water transport. I remember once seeing a map of projected canals in Kent. They were to run all over the place. I cannot remember many details, but I know one scheme was to link the Medway with the Royal Military Canal near Appledore by cutting from a point near East Peckham at a cost of £320,000. A bill was passed for this in 1811, but there was

A CRATER IN KENT.

much delay, and it was finally abandoned, whether on account of the subsequent foreshadowed railway projects or not I do not know. The sketch (facing page 126) of the Straight Mile near Tonbridge is also interesting in this connection, as it shows evidence of a similar abandoned canal project.

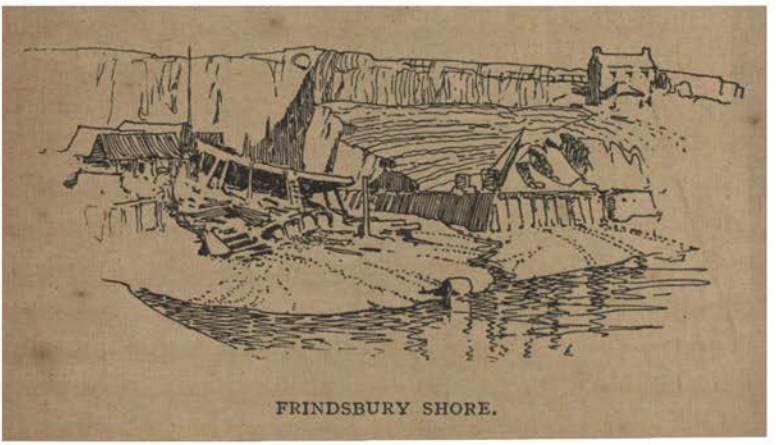
The tunnel which now carries the railway from Higham to Strood was finished in 1824 for the waterway known as the Thames Medway Canal. It was twenty-two feet in breadth with a towpath alongside five feet wide, two and a quarter miles long. An amusing account is given by a traveller who went through this subterranean way by steamboat soon after it was first opened.

"After our eyes had become reconciled to the transition to almost Egyptian darkness, relieved, however, by the lurid glare of our flambeaux, we had opportunity to contemplate our rather romantic situation. The steamer filled up nearly the whole channel, and the noise caused by the reverberation of the dash of the paddles in the water, the indistinct light, and the consciousness of being absolutely traversing the bowels of the earth, produced a very odd sensation."

The canal was not a financial success because, owing to difficulties of tide levels at each end, a barge passing through was not able to get out again as soon as she had made the seven-mile voyage. Thus, if there was any wind, barges could often sail round *viâ* Sheerness and be up at Strood as soon as through the canal, incidentally saving dues. However, there was a good deal of use made of it by the Maidstone barges.

The South Eastern Railway bought up the canal. The towpath was broadened by carrying out a platform on piles, and on this a single line was laid. A correspondent of the *Rochester Journal* describes the running of the first train on Christmas Day, 1844. He writes—

"I was in Frindsbury Church when the first whistle sounded. After the service the Vicar and Churchwardens



FRINDSBURY SHORE.

and most of the congregation went down in a body to see the wonderful machine. On coming through the tunnel the funnel of the engine struck against the chalk at the top, so they took it down and cut it nine inches shorter before they returned to Gravesend."

The crater-like opening into which I was now looking was a basin in the subterranean canal for the purpose of allowing barges coming in opposite directions to pass, and a quay for the horses and drivers to do likewise.

I returned by this same way at twilight, and then it was

that I saw the ghost of the old canal come out to walk abroad. The railway tries to forget its victim, but the ghost won't let it. Trains, brilliantly lighted, tear by, whistling bravely to keep up their courage, and then, shrieking into the tunnel on the other side, make for lights and London, but they cannot escape the memories of bygone days.

Down in the dim depths of that strange chasm invisible barges glide silently to and fro and ghostly feet tramp noiselessly upon the grass-grown quays: for the railway is haunted.

Cooling is generally believed to be the original of "Our Village" in *Great Expectations*. This is no doubt on account of the tombs in the churchyard, stone lozenges, with rows of little lozenges to commemorate a number of children that died in infancy. These are so exactly described by Dickens that somewhat unreasonably everybody jumps to the conclusion that all the other features of "Our Village" must be of Cooling. As a matter of fact, Chalk contests the honour somewhat successfully, for the church stands on the fringe of the marshes, alone and about a mile from the village.

I live in Rochester, where we have Dickensian Societies and all sorts of controversy about these things. We write to each other and write to the local papers and take sides when Jones and Robinson are at it hammer and tongs as to what in the Dickens is the right place. No one seems to remember that an author may take an artist's licence and mix things up a bit. It is great fun and adds zest to everyday life.

A BIT OF COOLING CASTLE.

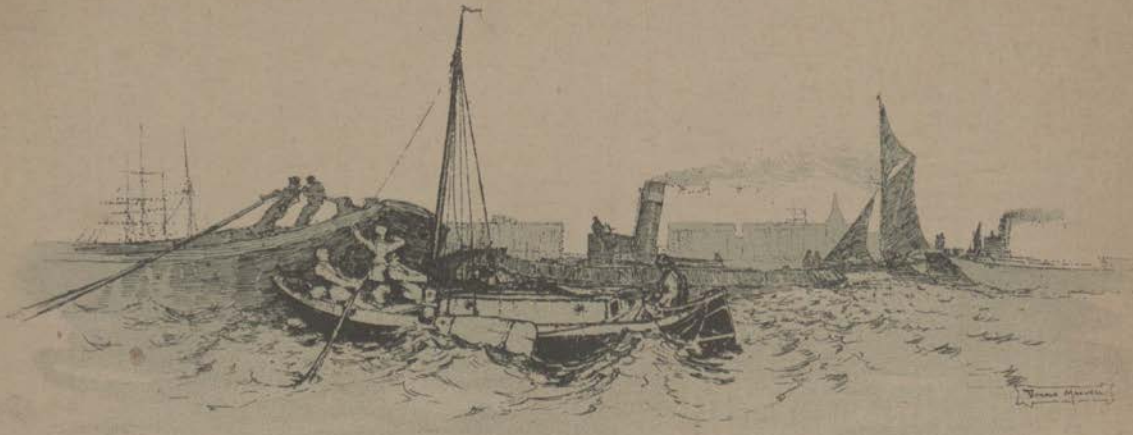
The principal interest of Cooling (Cowling) lies in the castle with a well-preserved machicolated gatehouse. Built within the area of the walls stands a perfectly modern and ordinary house, looking rather incongruous. Its chief historical interest clings round Sir John Oldcastle, in the time of Henry IV. He was arrested, tried for heresy, and taken to the Tower of London. He escaped once, but was recaptured and executed. The castle held out stubbornly against Sir Thomas Wyatt on his ill-starred march from Maidstone to London in the reign of Queen Mary.

This stronghold was built by John de Cobham in Richard II.'s time as a protection against foreign pirates who had ravaged the district. The purpose for which this old Manor House of Coulyng was thus fortified is still declared in an old tablet affixed to the gatehouse. It is significant that it is lettered in English in a period when almost all such inscriptions and charters were in Latin—no doubt as a sign that it was a defence against foreign foes. It runs—

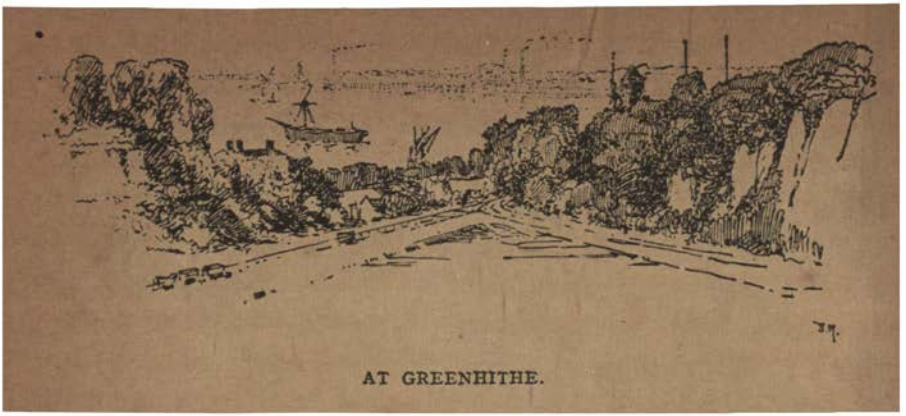
> Knouweth that beth & schul be
> That i am mad in help of the cuntre
> In knowyng of whyche thyng
> Thys is chartre & wytnessyng.

My acquaintance with riverside Kent above Gravesend has been made in boats of various kinds. Beginning when I was at school with journeys by steamboat to Greenwich from London I have always delighted in the wonderful shores of our muddy old Thames.

The first boat of my own was a Turkish dongola which



THE *WALRUS* AT GREENWICH



AT GREENHITHE.

I rigged at Teddington with lee-boards and high-peaked sail to the astonishment and derision of the somewhat conservative waterman. My next was the *Griffin*, which I built in the Alps and sailed—after twenty miles or so of mountaineering—*viâ* Lake Zurich, the Limmat, and the Rhine, to Holland. I wrecked her off the Kentish coast a year afterwards. We had an accident in being towed by a smack, and we had to let her go just off Kingsgate Castle. Then I bought a Dutch boat from the police in Holland, sailed her from Flushing to the Black Sea by river and canal, over the Frankischer Jura Alps, without taking her out of the water until she was loaded as deck cargo to a timber ship sailing from the Black Sea to Glasgow.

Brown and I, with a few other brave spirits, bumped every bridge in London, and had adventures in her that would do credit to Sinbad the Sailor. I have sketched her here, off Greenwich, in rather a lop, getting mixed up with everything, and having that time of concentrated discomfort which the

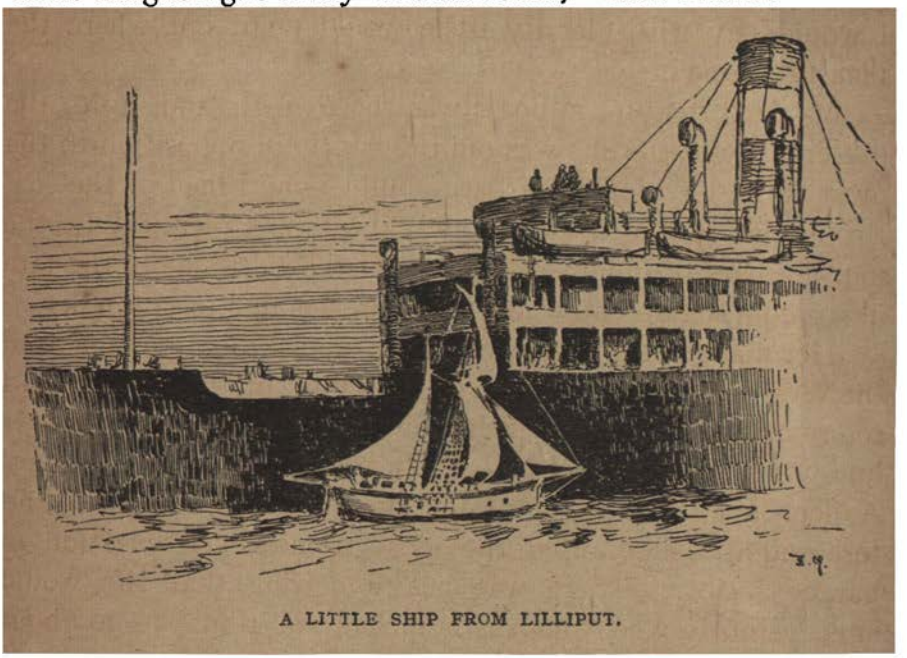
Briton calls pleasure. I remember once in Teddington Lock being hauled up for not having her properly registered as a pleasure vessel. It was raining hard, we were wet through and generally miserable. I pointed out to an obtuse official that I would pay with alacrity if he would point out where the pleasure came in.

My next venture in boats was the *Penguin* and, up to the present, my last. She was built defiantly in opposition to the most earnest reasoning of barge builders and men of the sea. Prophecies of the most gloomy kind were plentiful in the four-ale bars of innumerable riverside hostelries as to the fate in store for her and all who were insane enough to sail in her.

Her main oak timbers were those of a lug boat bought from the West India Dock Co., and she was built up till she had head room of six feet three inches under her deck. Her water line was thirty-five feet and her beam eleven feet two inches A leeboard boat, two masted, rigged square forward and fore-and-aft, she caused the most tremendous sensation in bargee society. There was heavy betting that she would sink instantly when she was launched and refuse to go about if she ever *did* get on to a wind.

These gloomy forebodings were happily not fulfilled and the *Penguin* started off at 5 o'clock one morning against a head wind and tacked gaily down the river. Wherever she went she was received with shouts of hilarious delight by the waterside population, who firmly imagined that they were witnessing some sort of historical performance for the "pictures." A tugman at Erith, in intervals between cries

of exhortation to his mates to come and behold the portent, alluded to her as the Ark of Noah. With his memories of the Hebrew Scriptures somewhat dimmed he inquired jovially, as he caught sight of my wife on board, " How's Eve ? "



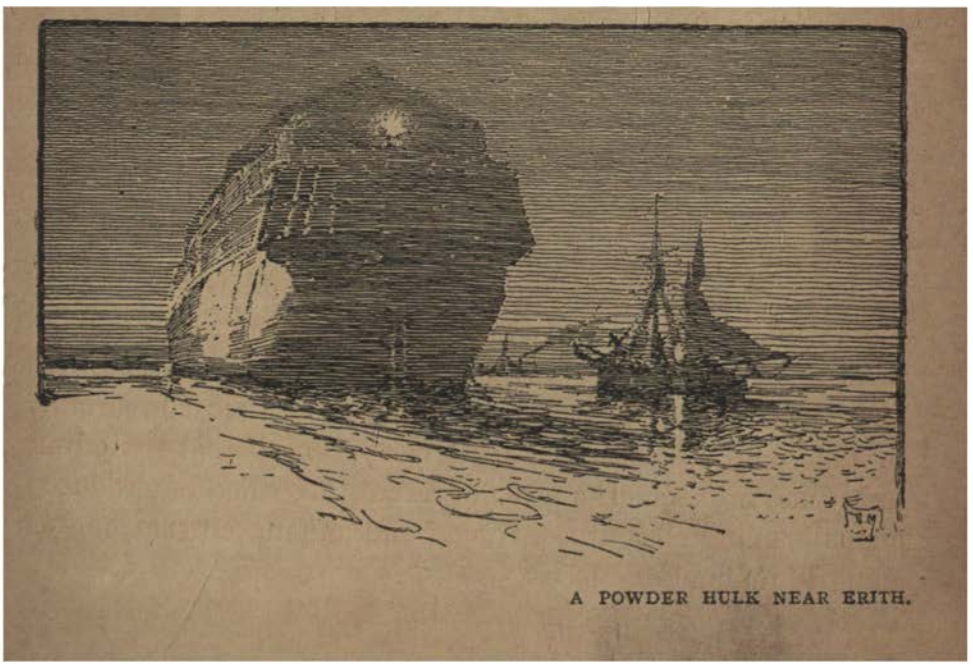
A LITTLE SHIP FROM LILLIPUT.

The advent of the *Penguin* was a nine days' wonder. When we saw pilots looking down upon us from a position on a ship somewhere above our topmast, we felt that we had justified our existence. It has been reported to me on good authority that one hardened reprobate who beheld us from the balcony of a riverside public-house, immediately " signed the pledge " and became a life-long total abstainer.

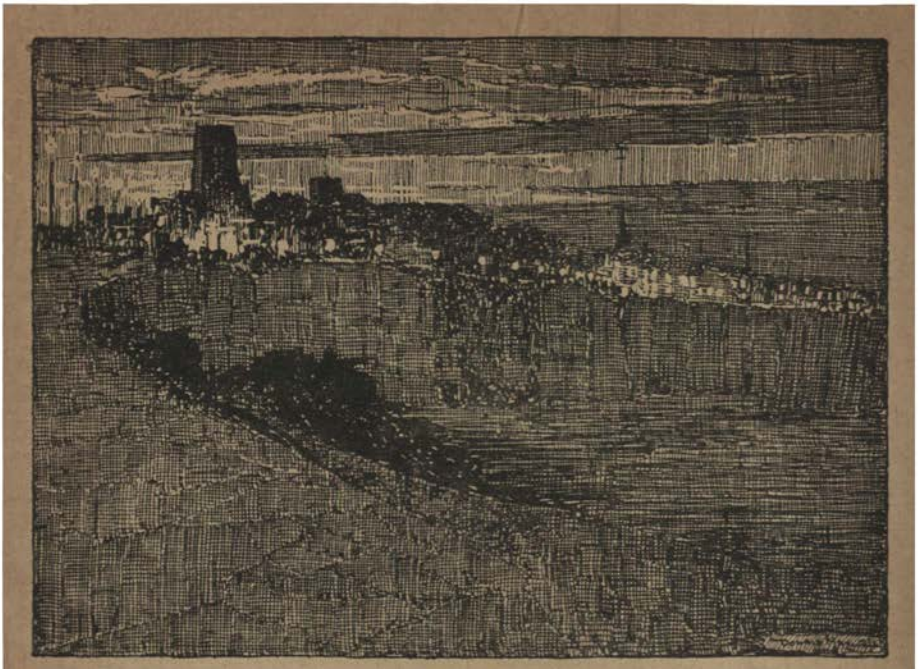
The novelty soon wore off and the *Penguin* was accepted

without comment by the intensely conservative population of the barge world. Before we laugh at this attitude of theirs towards something new as something to do with limited education, let us recall the fact that when steam was first introduced, and introduced with evident success, as a means of propelling ships, My Lords of the Admiralty asserted solemnly that such new methods, while possibly useful to commerce, were derogatory to the dignity of the Royal Navy.

I remember, too, a very picturesque hulk, looming large in the moonlight over against the Kentish shore near Erith. It was a windy night with a strong ebb tide running, and we anchored close under her lee for shelter. The place seemed very snug and safe, till Brown, at the moment of



A POWDER HULK NEAR ERITH.



A NOCTURNE OF NORTHFLEET.

setting the primus stove on fire, discovered that she was a powder hulk.

When I am at work on a travel book and Brown is with me I suffer a good deal from his enthusiasm. He tries to arrange explorations which will give me good material, and these often end in great waste of time and almost invariably in mud and discomfort. However, I am bound to admit he led me into something really interesting when he produced a small sailing boat at Gravesend and announced that he was going to take me to Mecca.

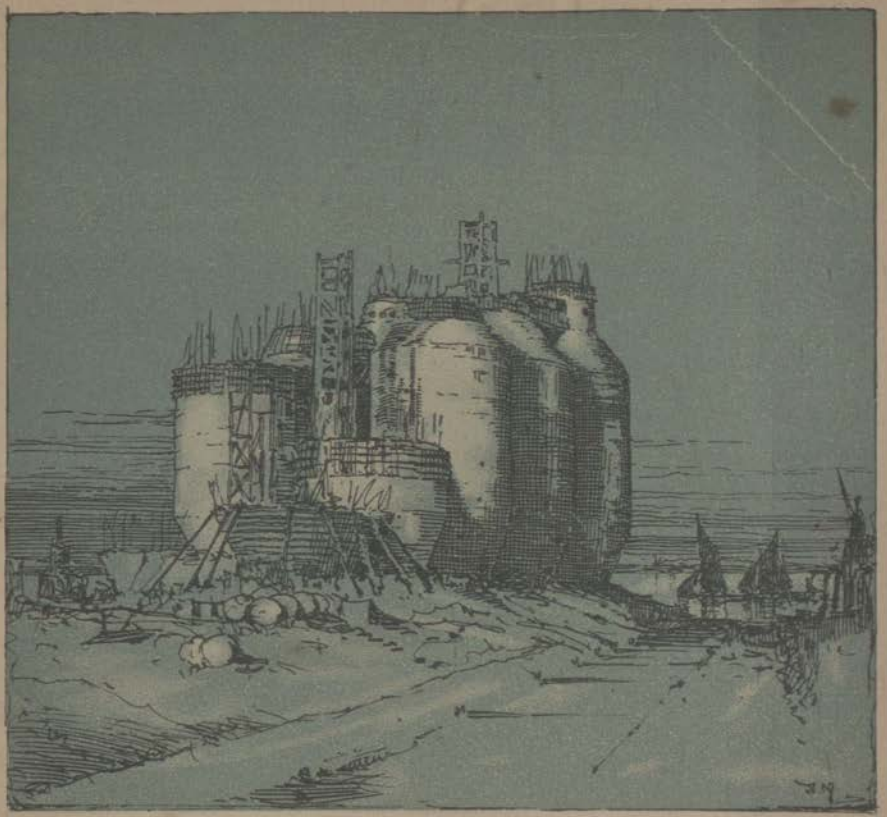
I knew Brown well enough to guess he would not say much about his plans till we got there. He told me this much, however, that pilgrims and devotees were always too late. By the time any cult had grown to pilgrim-attracting proportions the exhibit was often in too advanced a stage of ruin to be much to look at. He pointed out that George Stephenson's locomotive, the "Rocket," was almost the only example of the preservation of the first invention leading to world changes. Where is the first aeroplane, the first motor-car, the first steamship, the first gun?

Brown insisted on landing at the A.P.C.M. Company's pier at Northfleet, and took me into the labyrinths of some cement works. It was dark now, and we groped our way painfully until we stood before a curious-shaped kiln, much the worse for wear, shaped like a cone with the top cut off.

"Behold," said Brown, "the Mecca of the future. Pilgrims will come from the East and from the West to see this sight."

"But," I protested, "it is only an ordinary bottle-kiln of the old type. There are some like that by New Hythe on the Medway (see sketch, page 92). Why should anybody come here?"

"There have been many ages and many civilizations," Brown continued. "There was the Flint Age, for instance, and the Bronze Age. The last century, with all its mechanical strides in machinery, might be named—in fact, it *has* been named—the Iron Age. The coming age will be known as the Ferro-concrete Age. It is the great material of the future. This kiln was set up by one Aspdin, the discoverer of the



THE GIANT JARS OF GREENHITHE

modern process of cement-making on which ferro-concrete construction depends, just about a hundred years ago."

I venerated the relic, and we returned to the boat. The wind was fresh, and we were soon beating up towards London with a strong tide under us.

"The next chapter in this story," declared Brown, "is at Greenhithe."

We reached the training ship *Warspite* about 11.0 p.m. The moon was up, and everything looked very romantic. Even the back alleys and mean houses of the outskirts of Greenhithe along by the railway seemed like pictures for the *Arabian Nights*, and the air of reserve and mystery that Brown maintained as to our destination exactly suited the adventure.

"Ferro-concrete," said Brown, "is, as its name denotes, a combination of iron or steel in the form of bars, rods, wires, or trellis to reinforce the concrete. The concrete sets and combines with the iron skeleton, making a coherent mass of enormous strength. The first use of ferro-concrete was made by Arnolfo in Florence, when he put an iron chain round his famous dome and embedded it in cement. He established the principle, but no architect seems to have seen the possibilities of the process for building. In like manner the Greeks knew of the power of steam, making toys spin round and round by means of its force; but no one thought of making it do something more useful."

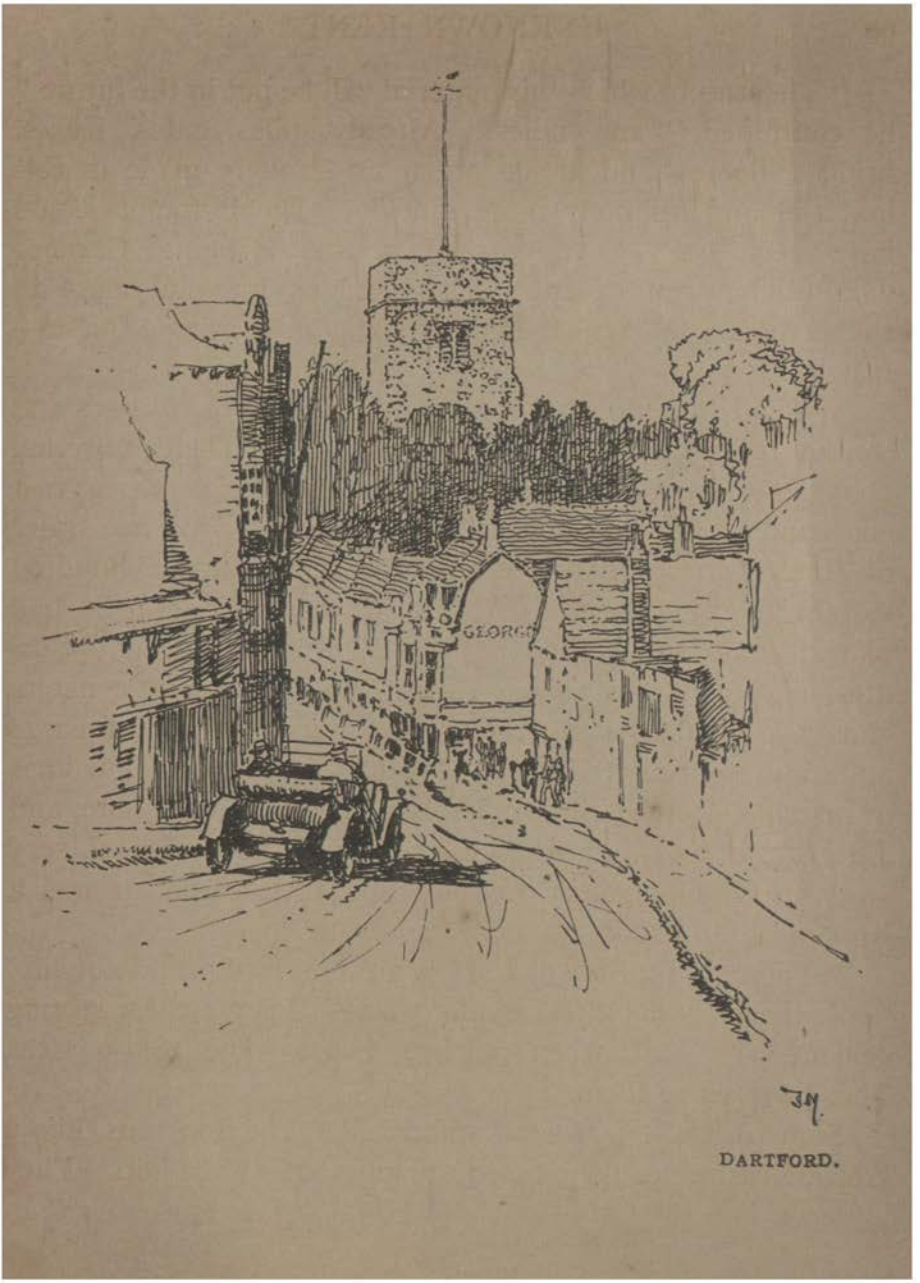
We came out from the path by the railway embankment and proceeded down a street of very ugly houses, Brown still discoursing on the wonders of ferro-concrete.

"The uses to which this material will be put in the future," he continued, "are endless. Already, piles, gates, fences, bridges, domes, and arches are more strongly made in this material and infinitely more quickly. The Pyramids could have been built in a year or so, the Hanging Gardens of Babylon run up in a week, and as for the house in the *Arabian Nights*, that was built in a single night—behold!"

We had turned down at the end of a line of cottages and come into an open space of flat, low land. There, towering above us, like a magic castle in the moonlight, was a vast construction—unreal, unearthly, belonging to no order of architecture. There seemed to be giant jars, a hundred feet or more in height. At first I thought the light had played some trick, and that I should discover an optical illusion; but no, we walked up to them. They were concrete enough. Stealing along the silent waterway, a topsail barge and a stumpy reflected in the placid river. Beyond, low lines of marshes stretched interminably along the Essex shore, and a foreground of tumbled objects and pieces of machinery gave an air of mystery to the scene. Altogether it was a wonderful fantasy."

"These," said Brown, with an air almost of proprietorship, "are the biggest bottles in the world. They are for storing cement, and will, when finished, house some 18,000 tons. There are ten of them."

Some of these jars were unfinished. The iron rods, like a crop of rushes, could be seen sticking out at the top. They



DARTFORD.

stood by the side of the river, well placed for loading into ships and barges at the quay.

Brown had scored this time. The dramatic effect which he had tried to produce for me had failed in our first glimpse of Baghdad, but had come off brilliantly on the Thames shore of the Super-Cement Co. of Kent.

ASPDIN'S KILN, NORTHFLEET.

VII

THE LAND OF CEMENT

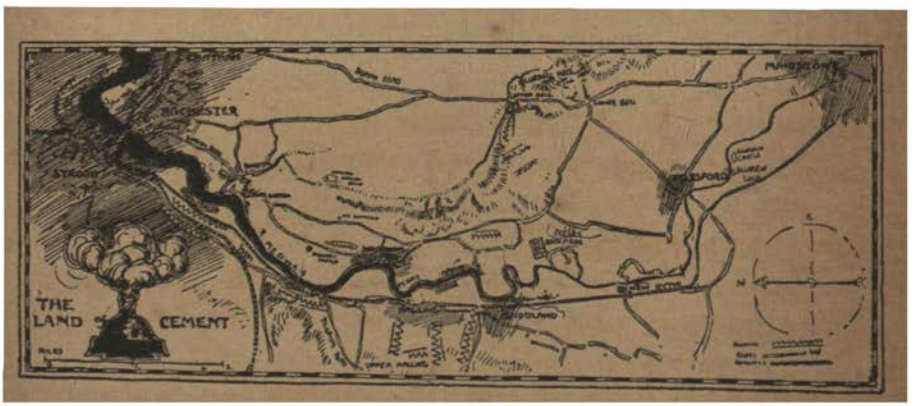
THE LAND OF CEMENT

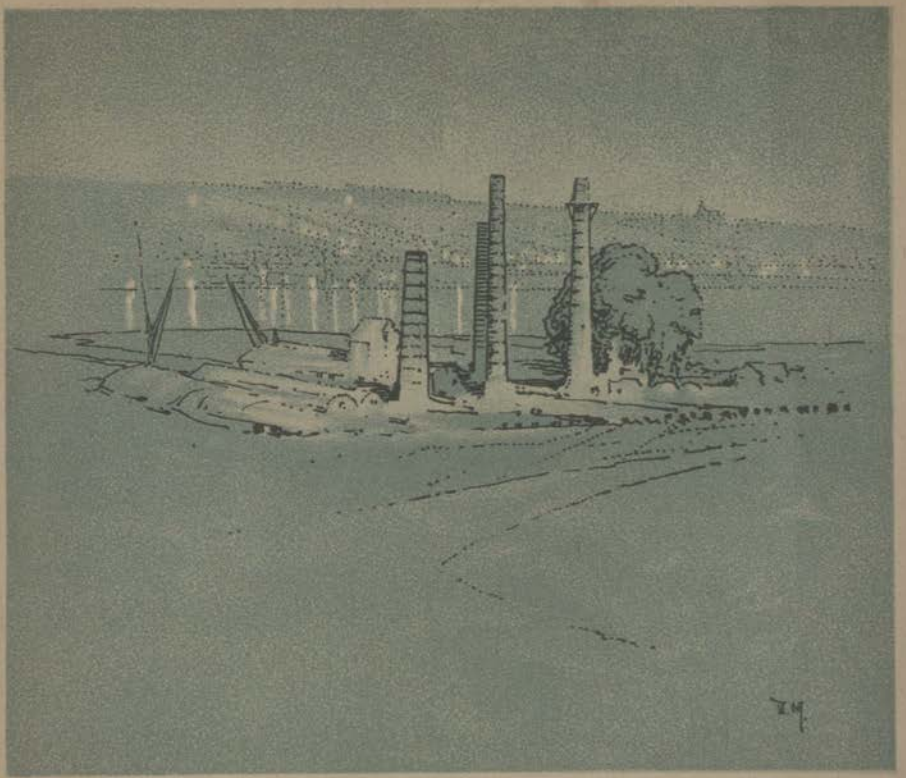
IT was years ago that Brown and I explored the Medway in the *Penguin*, pushing on beyond the barrier of Rochester bridge till we reached Aylesford. The story of the cruise is quite beyond my powers of description. Suffice it to say that it is a tale of great hardship and incredible discomfort. The river was strange to us then. There is practically nowhere to land at high water and nowhere to anchor at low water except right in the middle of the channel, which is very narrow, or where going aground at an angle of forty-five degrees is the result. Picture, therefore, the woes of a ship which cannot stop, doomed to wander up and down, seeking rest and finding none.

We spent our days in strenuous efforts with a kedge anchor, and our nights in accommodating our bunks to the various wild angles which the boat took at various states of the tide ; but we reached Aylesford bridge in triumph, and I do not suppose many craft of the same tonnage have *sailed* the whole way before or since.

After a few days of this nightmare navigation, Brown was called to town by an important business appointment. He left suddenly on the homeward journey, when the boat had stuck near Snodland—dropping tide and night coming on. He did not return. For months afterwards the mere mention of a kedge anchor would make him look miserable.

Although this attempted exploration of the upper Medway had been a failure, we had seen enough of the country to whet our appetite for further voyaging. We wanted to search out the river above Maidstone, where the valley of quarries narrows into the valley of hops. When planning holidays with Brown I often suggested getting towed up in stages to





CEMENT WORKS AT BORSTAL

THE "PENGUIN" BELOW BRIDGE.

Tonbridge and exploring in a dinghy; but Brown was markedly unenthusiastic.

The solution of the problem came about in an unexpected manner by Brown becoming owner of a motor-boat. I believe he bought it (I refuse to refer to it as "her") out of self-defence, rather than find himself involved in some quixotic attempt to navigate inland waters with a sea-going ship, his last experience having left him with a peculiar horror of such methods of travel.

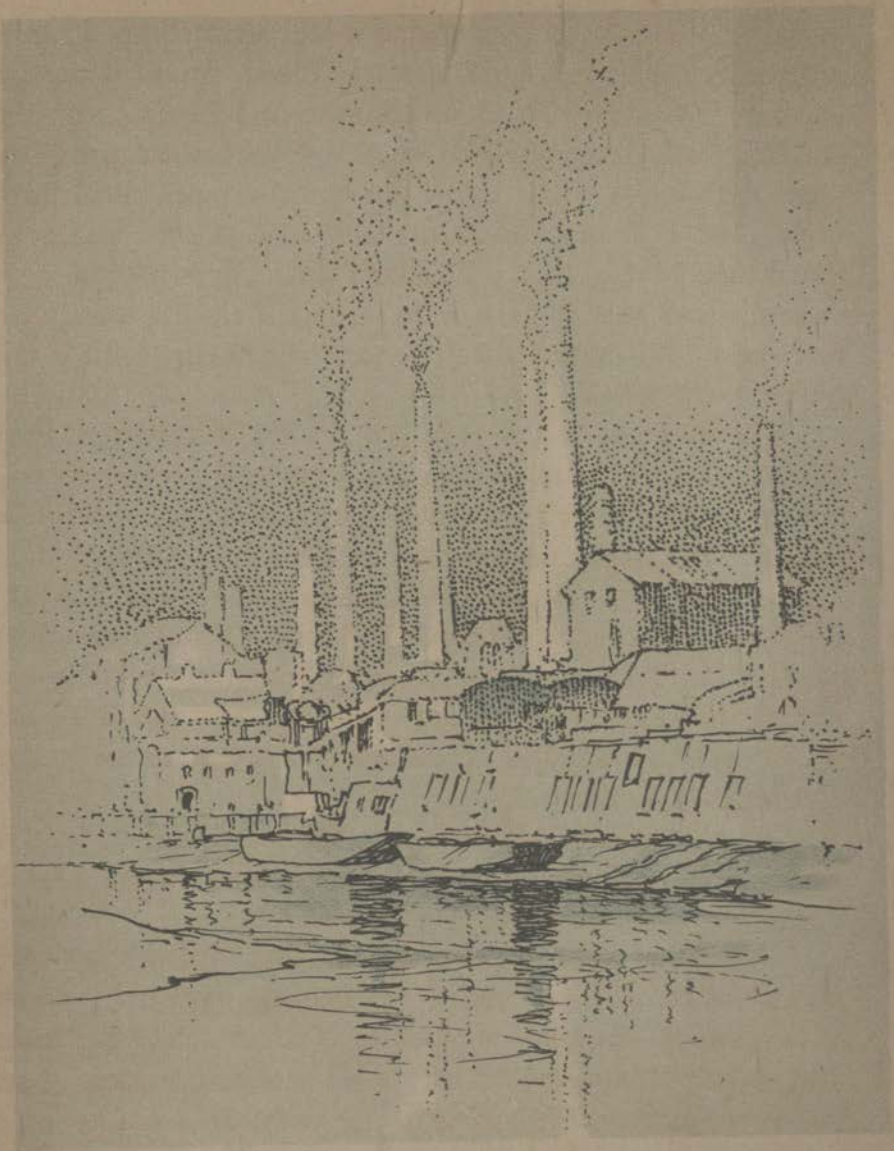
I will not describe the boat, for fear of hurting the feelings of the builder, or of Brown, who swears by it. Whenever it broke down Brown could give so lucid an explanation of the cause and prove so clearly that the circumstances were utterly exceptional, that it left him with added admiration

of its powers. Any other engine would have stopped running long before, and most, he was convinced, would never have started. Whatever spark of admiration I had for the thing was effectually extinguished on the day that Brown left me alone with it. I admit that I am not of a mechanical turn of mind, but I do not think a really nice engine would take advantage of the fact. This one knew Brown, who would caress it and feed it here and there with tit-bits from an oil-can and fiddle about with little taps and things until it fairly purred with delight.

Whenever I took it on it sulked. I did exactly what Brown did—fiddled about with taps and nuts and poured oil on it, far more than Brown ever did—but it used to back-fire and miss-fire and catch on fire and do all sorts of stupid things. Then Brown would come over and *look* at it, and it went as merrily as possible. However, it is not so much to tell you of a motor-boat and how I couldn't manage it that I am writing these chapters on the Medway, but rather to show what varied country is accessible above the ordinary limits of a Medway cruise.

Ye yachtsmen who have motor-boats and who are weather-bound below bridge, I write to make known to you a land of delight, a valley of mystery, a river of romance.

Marred by intruding commerce and stained by sordid manufacture, a lovely valley has become, they say, a valley of desolation—its villages black with the smoke of the furnace and its fair hills devoured by the encroaching works: doubly betrayed indeed, for has not the ravisher been ravished?



THE PILLARS OF WOULDHAM

THE HORSE-SHOE BEND: THE MEDWAY AT BURHAM.

Ruined kilns and tottering chimneys skirt the river, and quarries abound in which red-rusted machinery and decrepit trains of trucks lie abandoned as by a plague-stricken people.

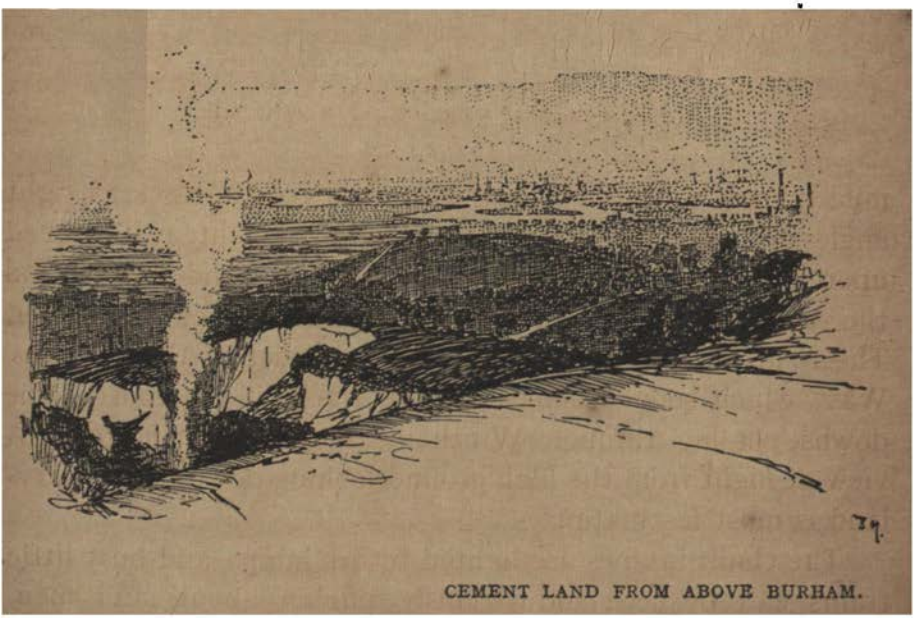
To those, however, who know this country intimately there is another side. The Medway, even here, has an indescribable charm. The association of tidal river and marshland with high wooded country on *both* sides gives it a unique character. The great chalk cliffs add ruggedness and the smoking furnaces grimness, so that the effect of the whole is singularly impressive.

Between Rochester and New Hythe, where the river changes its character abruptly, is a succession of cement works and kilns, some working and some deserted, all with

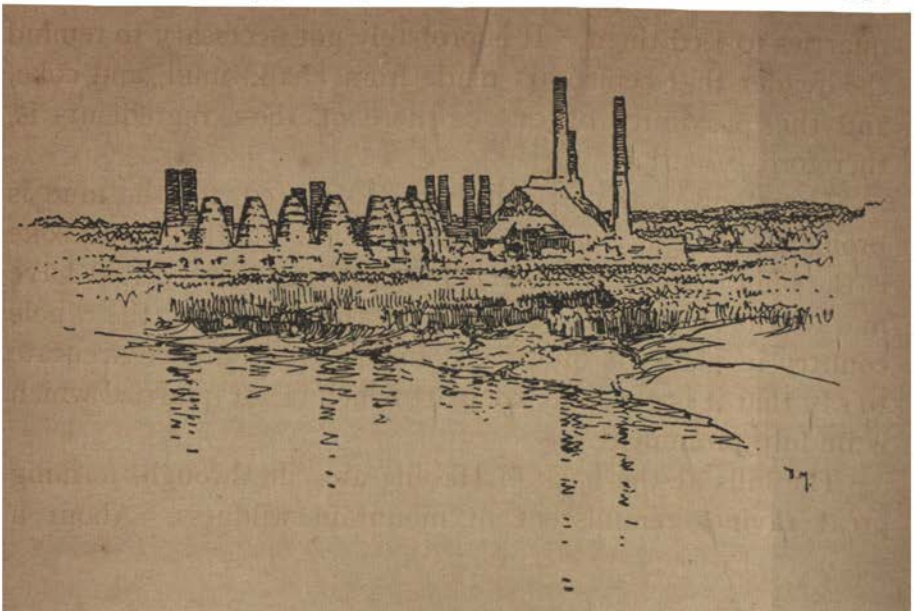
quarries to feed them. It is probably not necessary to remind the reader that cement is made from chalk, mud, and coke, and the proximity of one or more of these ingredients is, therefore, essential.

The Medway is particularly well situated, for the mud is brought in barges from the saltings below Chatham, and coke is the only item that has to come from any distance. I have marked most of these quarries on the map, but the whole country in places is quarried. In fact, it would be accurate to say that it is generally the part which is not quarried which is unduly prominent.

The hills at the back of Halling are cut through, forming great ravines reminiscent of mountain wildness. About a



CEMENT LAND FROM ABOVE BURHAM.



RUINS OF CEMENT WORKS NEAR NEW HYTHE.

mile inland, up one of these gorges, a road crosses at right angles and some houses are seen at a giddy height, as if perched upon a gigantic wall. The chalk trains run underneath, and the same level is maintained at the other side of the barrier. The road, it is interesting to notice, is part of the Pilgrims' Way, which soon becomes a mere track at the foot of the downs passing through Wrotham towards Winchester. A view at night from the high ground looking down into quarry-land is most fascinating.

The chalk ravines are lighted by arc lamps, and busy little trains can be seen industriously puffing about, and men,

roped like Alpine climbers, hewing at giddy heights on precipitous cliffs. It is worth while, too, to land at night at Halling to observe the Dantesque effects of lurid light when the stokers throw open the furnace doors and chequered lights appear on the drifting smoke.

It is a dangerous corner on a falling tide. The current sets across from the ferry-shelter very strongly towards the works, where there are generally some swim-head lighters to get under if your motor fails at this critical time. I know it from experience, having had to negotiate it on a windless day when sailing. Be careful, also, of the other extreme, and keeping so far in at the point that your boat gets caught in an eddy and spins round and round.

From Halling to Snodland the river is literally walled on one side or the other with kilns and loading barges, and then we come to more open country and the remarkable horse-shoe bend, which starts just above the paper-mills, winds round by the old church at Burham Court Farm, and back almost to the same place again.

From a distance across the fields it is bewildering to watch the manœuvres of tugs and barges, for, unless you happen to know the course of the river, you can make nothing of them.

In the sketch on page 99, the barge shown on the right of the picture will come down to the black water on left. This is the point to which she will get finally, but only after she has sailed round this big loop, and not, as it would appear, by continuing straight on. I have seen these fields entirely

THE NEARER EAST
A FANTASY OF BLUEBELL HILL

covered with water, so that the course of the river was not apparent. There was a tug coming up at full speed, and she suddenly started on what looked like the most eccentric gyrations, doubling back and zig-zagging about. As a matter of fact, she was merely keeping the ordinary channel.

At New Hythe are remains of deserted cement works with rows of old-fashioned conical kilns. There are some quaint timbered cottages, too, well worth looking at, and one especially to be noticed up a small lane to the left as you leave the river. It is an adaptation of some very ancient building, probably a pilgrim chapel, for at various points here the pilgrims must have crossed from the Way on the downs above Snodland to the corresponding track along the hills, through Boxley and Charing to Canterbury.

When land floods correspond with a spring tide, New Hythe becomes a Kentish Venice. I have seen barges' boats manœuvring in the village street almost as far as the level crossing.

Above the ferry the river changes its character, and Cement Land disappears suddenly from view.

We brought our boat to shore at a wharf near Aylesford station, and did not proceed on our voyage until we had done what every one should do who undertakes this journey—seek out Bluebell Hill and there get a magnificent panoramic idea of the whole country. On the road that leads thither, joining the main road at the Lower Bell, can be seen the remains of an ancient stone circle—known as the Countless Stones. They lie beneath three trees in a field on the right—

about one hundred feet from the road, as far as I can remember —almost opposite a stile.

Brown and I, in common with most people, had imagined that we should see a valley filled with a vast litter of

A KENTISH VENICE—NEW HYTHE IN FLOOD.

rocks, so that at first we were disappointed. The word "countless" has been applied to them, not because there are so many that no one can number them, but because it is said that two people never arrive at the same result in counting them. The number is about a dozen, as a matter of fact.

They lie in such confusion that it is impossible to see them all at once, and one is apt to tick off the same stone twice in walking round, and some being buried in the ground may protrude at different points, and thus be reckoned as two.

A little further up the road on the left, prominently situated, is Kits Coty House, the traditional burial place of a British chief. The local story told is that an old woman was carrying three loaves, one on her head and one under each arm, when something or other happened, I forget what, and she has remained like that in a petrified condition ever since.

Here, too, you can find some outposts of the chalk pits. There are three quarries in Bluebell Hill, two of them have kilns that are being used for lime burning. Some cottages, built of chalk, stand picturesquely in the woods looking down the steep slope. Hewn chalk as a building material is more common in Kent than is usually supposed. One delightful little quarry is hidden away among the trees just above the Lower Bell. The cliff is topped with dense woods and the roots of the pines fantastically fringe the edge. The kilns are round-topped, satisfactory-shaped old things that suggest something romantic and Eastern. I am sure wicked genii emerge from them when you are not looking.

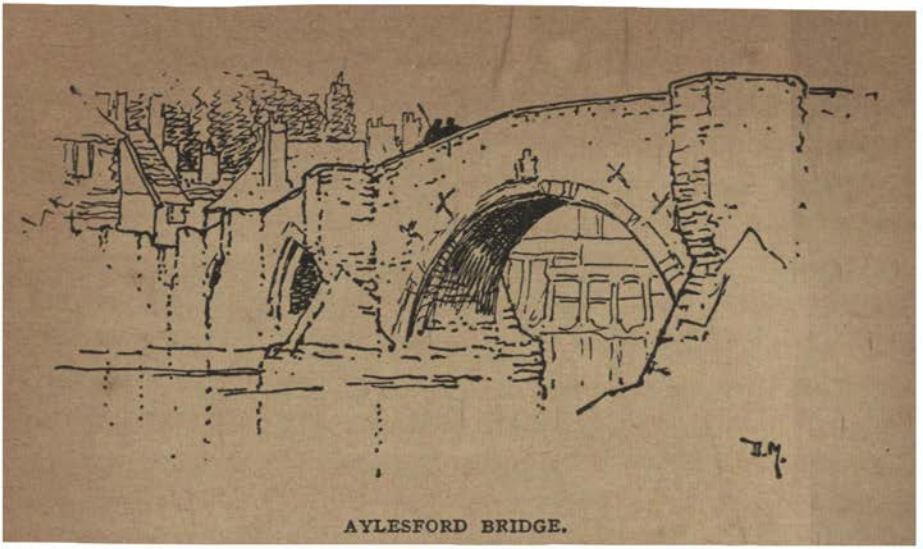
Some great chalk hummocks have been left as buttresses to give additional strength to these fissured and fire-worn structures, and the whole effect is quite beautiful. If you

have not felt the eerie charm of this country, stay here when twilight deepens and watch the furnaces send rays to wander among the clematis-covered trees, and I prophesy that you will be purged of that heresy which teaches that the works of commerce are nothing but the spoiling of the works of nature.

VIII

THE LAND OF THE BRIDGES

AYLESFORD.



AYLESFORD BRIDGE.

THE LAND OF THE BRIDGES

THE first view of Aylesford as it comes into sight at a bend of the river is a striking one. The church, built on a steep bank, rises above a cluster of old houses with gardens fringing the water. Nothing could illustrate better the entire change of character which the river undergoes at this point. The land of cement depends upon space for its charm. Its villages are frankly hideous. We are delighted with the scene when the houses are out of sight or sufficiently distant to be vague.

Here it is different. The scale of everything is far smaller, but a variety of charm lies in multitudinous details. The chief boast of Aylesford is its ancient bridge, which is worth

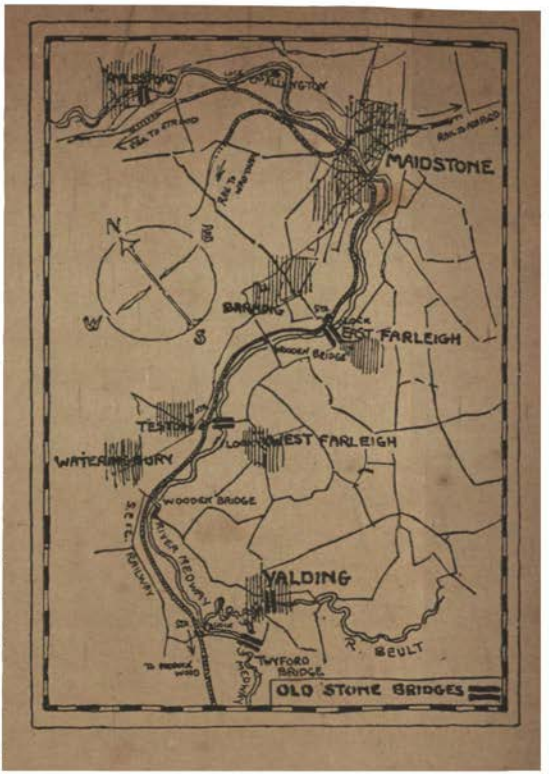
a pilgrimage to see. It is the first of five magnificent examples of mediæval bridge-building which give a special interest to the river scenery for the next twelve miles, and on account of which this chapter is called "The Land of the Bridges"—and on account of these alone. There are other devices for crossing the river, both by road and rail; but, beside these five, there is nothing worth calling a bridge.

Aylesford has been altered to the extent of throwing two arches into one, for the barges to go through, but there must always have been one arch sufficiently large for big craft, because there are centuries-old records of small ships trading between Maidstone and the sea.

These other four bridges—East Farleigh, Teston, and the two at Yalding—are still as they always have been, except for a few minor alterations in the approaches. I do not know if the exact dates of the building of these bridges is known, but the style of work, more especially in the pointed arches, seems to indicate church builders. In the latter half of the twelfth century brotherhoods arose whose special mission was the keeping up of the hospices for travellers and pilgrims, and the building of bridges. They were known as "Hospitalarii Pontifices," and it is to them, probably, that these bridges owed their origin, although often private people built a bridge as a pious act. I came across a record of 1780 which speaks of one thus erected near East Barming, long since gone and replaced.

There is something restful and satisfactory about these relics of Old England. At East Farleigh the arches are ribbed

THE MEDWAY NEAR MAIDSTONE



underneath like a church roof. It is here that Fairfax and his troops thundered over to the capture of Maidstone. Teston Bridge, standing alone among green fields, brings up an ideal "scene" for a skirmish between Cavaliers and Roundheads, such as Mr. Ernest Crofts has so often depicted.

We started from the station wharf at Aylesford, nearly on top of the tide, passed The Friars, an ancient mansion, through the bridge into the tree-bordered reach which leads to Allington, where is the first lock—a distance altogether of about a mile and a half—and then achieved the tideless waters above it. The lock is delightfully situated at the foot of wooded slopes, and presents a busy scene at high water when the tugs are marshalling the barges that are going up or down.

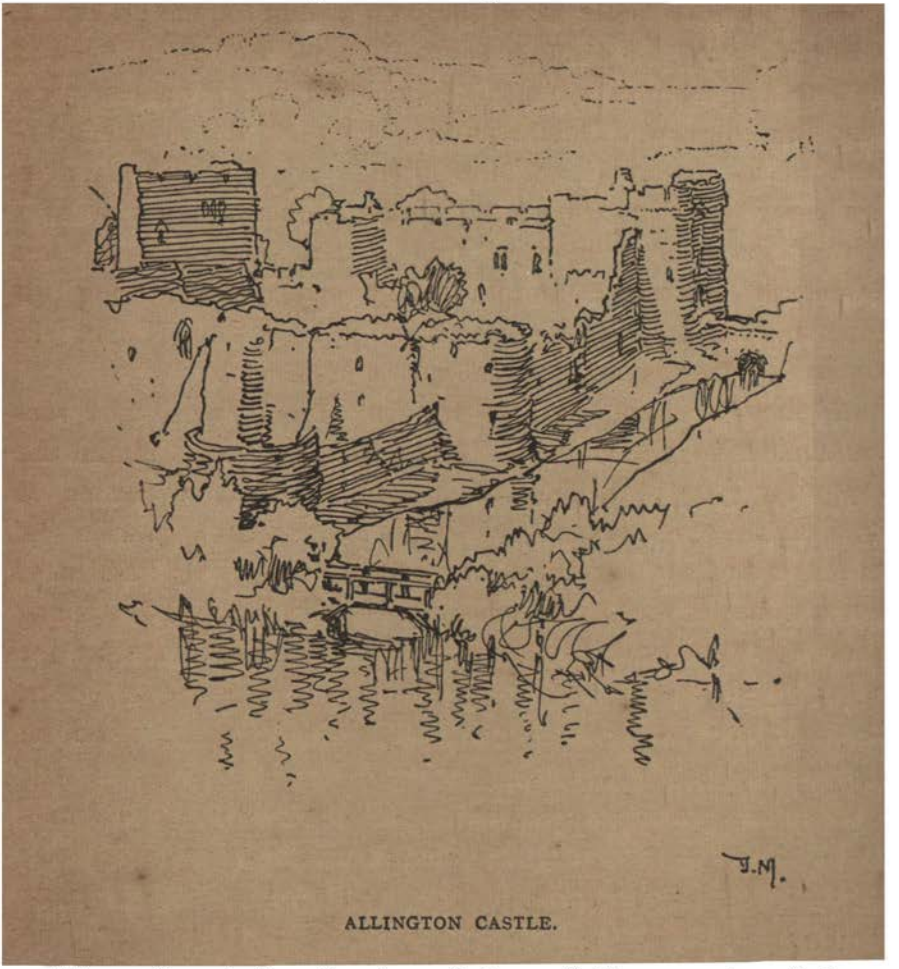
The placid reach above this point runs under the battered walls of Allington Castle, a delightful relic of other days, partly restored and in use and partly left in picturesque decay.

A moat runs round it, communicating with the river. Some idea of this can be gathered from the rough sketch on page opposite, a note taken from the high ground on the other side of the Medway, for some reasons the most interesting view of the castle. Hidden from the main road, which passes quite near (a stile by "The Running Horse" shows the foot-path to the riverside), and invisible from the railway, unless you know exactly where to look for a distant glimpse of a part of its walls, Allington Castle is very little known, even to people who live comparatively near. Considering its dimensions and state of preservation, this is remarkable. It was one of the seven principal castles in Kent.

A fortress stood on this site in Saxon times, and was demolished by the Danes. It was rebuilt, and William the Conqueror gave it to Odo, Bishop of Bayeux. A warden of the Cinque Ports obtained a grant for a weekly market on Tuesdays and a three-days' fair on the feast of St. Laurence. It was enlarged to its present dimensions in Edward I.'s reign. From Allington Castle the ill-fated Sir Thomas Wyatt set out on his bold attempt to veto the Spanish marriage of Queen Mary, raising the men of Kent to march to London, where he was defeated and finally beheaded.

A little more than a mile above the lock, Maidstone comes into sight—a poor approach, like the approach to most towns; but there is a good view ahead when the group of ancient riverside buildings appear at the bend above the town. The fourteenth-century Palace, All Saints' Church, and the College, which dates from 1260, made a magnificent group. The best

view is obtained from the bridge, or, to be quite consistent, the-device-for-crossing-the-river-by-road.



ALLINGTON CASTLE.

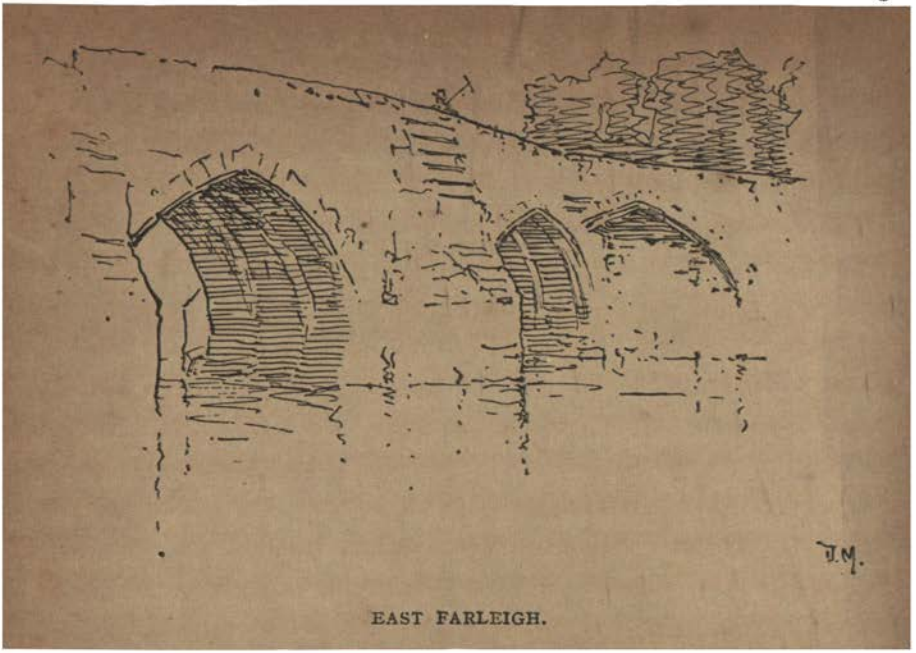
Were it not for the knowledge of the country I have obtained at other times, I should have singularly little idea

of the Medway between Maidstone and Wateringbury, for here it was that Brown left me to manage the boat alone. He had called for letters and found that he would have to run up to town for the day, but first he instructed me in the art of driving the engine. With cheery optimism I suggested meeting him in a few hours' time at Tonbridge. He, with less faith in my mechanical powers, delicately hinted that it was possible I might not get so far. Finally, we arranged that I should telegraph my position in the afternoon and he would join me wherever that should be.

He started the engine and hopped out, while I shot forward, confident of success. Brown watched me until the corner took me out of sight, looking, I thought, somewhat anxious; but I was sure there was no need to fear. He had told me exactly what to do in any emergency. I was not in the least disconcerted when the engine stopped as I was passing the wharves at Tovil. I started it again, just like Brown did, with great success and considerable surprise that it was so simple. I thought with some scorn of Brown's statement that the artistic temperament did not go with mechanical skill. Then it stopped again and I started it again—not, it is true, with quite the same facility; but still the engine was running, if somewhat spasmodically. I then did a fatal thing, as I found out afterwards. I increased the supply of petrol. With base ingratitude the thing stopped altogether, and refused to be coaxed into going at all.

Tying up the boat, I landed and sought professional advice. The only assistance I could get was from a man

OLD MAIDSTONE FROM THE RIVER



EAST FARLEIGH.

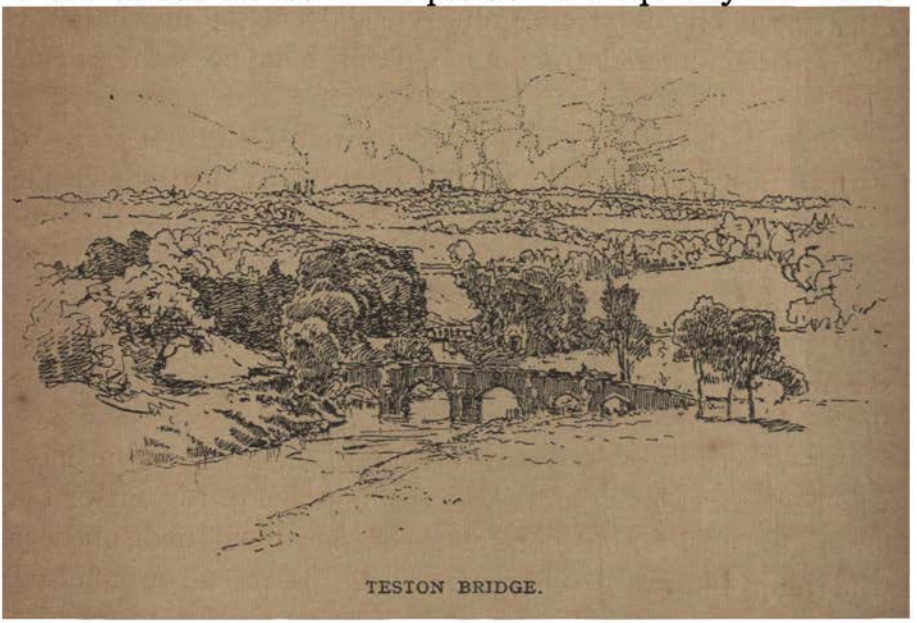
who assured me he understood everything about engines, having spent most of his life among them. By this time I had given up the attempt to find a motor-boat expert, so I accepted his offer. He began by asking where the fire was, which was not encouraging. He explained that all the engines he had ever managed had fires. I told him that the only fires we ever had on board were accidental; but he said he thought he could soon find out what was the matter. He looked at the motor and said it wanted oiling. Producing a can he pronounced it all right if it were once started. I tried immediately, and it went merrily. What a wonderful thing is expert knowledge! I thought half a crown had been too

easily earned, but I was thankful that the boat was going so well. However, it soon began to fail again, and not far below East Farleigh Lock it stopped dead. This time I found a real engineer, or, at any rate, a man wearing a boiler suit, which inspired not a little confidence in the uninitiated. He started the engine at once, and I could not see in what way his starting differed from mine. But I suppose the engine could.

Now that the boat was going so well I did not want to stop it just because of a mere lock. Brown had shown me how to move the clutch and thus alter the angle of the propeller blades for stopping still or going astern. I therefore dashed into the lock at full speed and then reversed. Somehow the boat did not pull up as quickly as I had expected she would, and I charged the upper gates with considerable force.

There was a crash, and then I found the reversing business was being overdone, and I was rushing backwards out of the lower gates. I jammed on full speed ahead and made another wild plunge forward, churning up the water all around. I reversed sooner this time, and then settled down to a series of nerve-racking spurts backwards and forwards, but managed to hit nothing. By this time I became dimly conscious of another boat, which had apparently broken adrift in the lock, and beheld an elderly lady climbing in terror up a slippery, weed-covered ladder, shouting for help. Thus the promptings of humanity rather than faintheartedness in experimental motor-boating compelled me to stop the engine.

When Brown responded to my telegram by joining me at the lock below Wateringbury, whither I had made my way by means of every device known to navigation, except motor-power, he explained what had been wrong in my management. I had turned on too much petrol. Consequently the valve



TESTON BRIDGE.

soon froze. The work of the two alleged engineers was mere coincidence. In each case there had been an interval for liquefaction, and any one could have started the engine for a time, although it would obviously soon get into the same condition again. Under Brown's control, the boat ran without a hitch, and in about twenty minutes we were entering Yalding Lock. Above this point there is a canal-like reach

which saves a tortuous loop of river, joining up again at a delightful spot above Twyford Bridge, where we moored and spent the rest of the evening in exploring what proved to be one of the most unspoiled and unconsciously picturesque old villages we had ever seen—Yalding.

Above the village, the ridge of hill which I have described more fully further on in "The Amateur Archæologists" affords glorious views of the Weald. It is worth a stiff climb to stand near the old farm of Burston, once the seat of the Fane family, to look down on the gleaming waters of the Medway as it winds among the level grass lands and loses itself among thick trees. It is from a field near this place that I made the sketch for the plate "The Medway at Yalding" (facing page 152). If you can be up there on a day when there is a tearing wind and a broken sky that chequers the distant country with sunshine and shadow, you will take away with you haunting memories.

This region is the richest of all the hop country of Kent. West Farleigh, Yalding, and Hunton form together a veritable Mecca of Hops. Hunton, with its old church and shingle spire almost hidden in trees, is worth a visit, and the valley further on holds in store many surprises in the way of half-timbered farm-houses and quaint cottages, but it lies outside the radius of a motor-boat's itinerary.

Here flows the river Beult, joining the Medway loop and explorable to greatest advantage in a canoe. Yalding is very liable to floods, on account of the sudden narrowing of the valley at this point. The wide level fields suddenly become

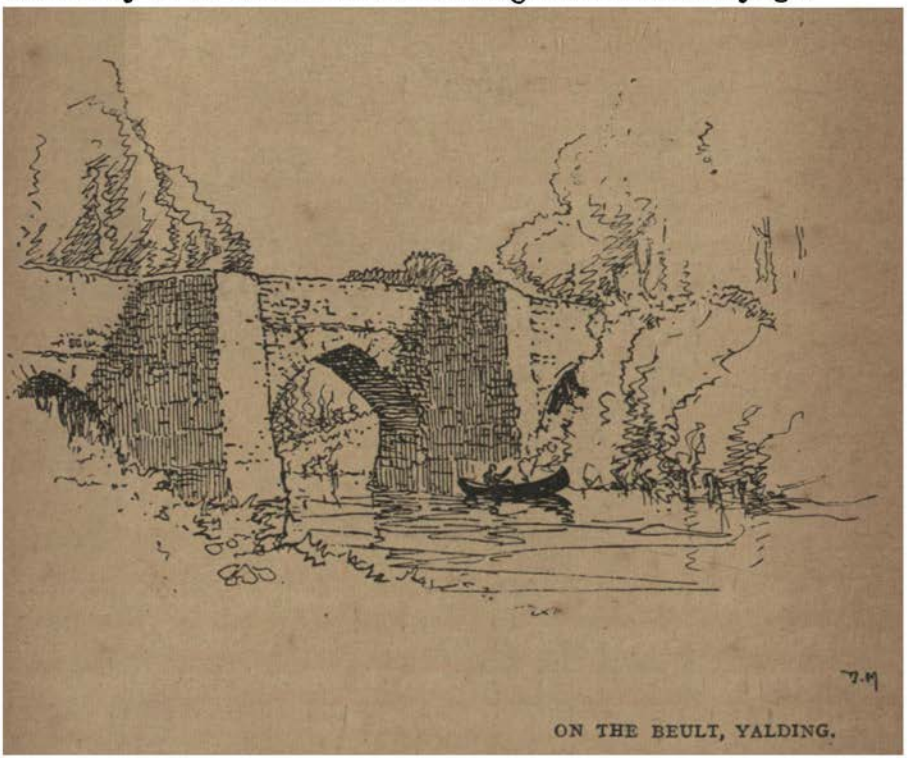
hemmed in by hills (ABC and DEF on map, p. 127), and the Yalding region is a wedge-shaped plain with the narrow neck at Nettleshead and Wateringbury as the only means of escape

BRIDGE AND CHURCH, YALDING.

for the flood water. Consequently the Medway stream at this point between the high land on either bank is unable to keep pace with the demands made upon it when heavy rains have come down from Tonbridge and the Beult. Along the level tracts of grass between Twyford Bridge and Yalding village white posts are placed to mark the roads and paths when the whole place is under water. The Beult is crossed by a rambling,

buttressed bridge, which is a delight to the eye, of the most sturdy proportions and weather-beaten aspect.

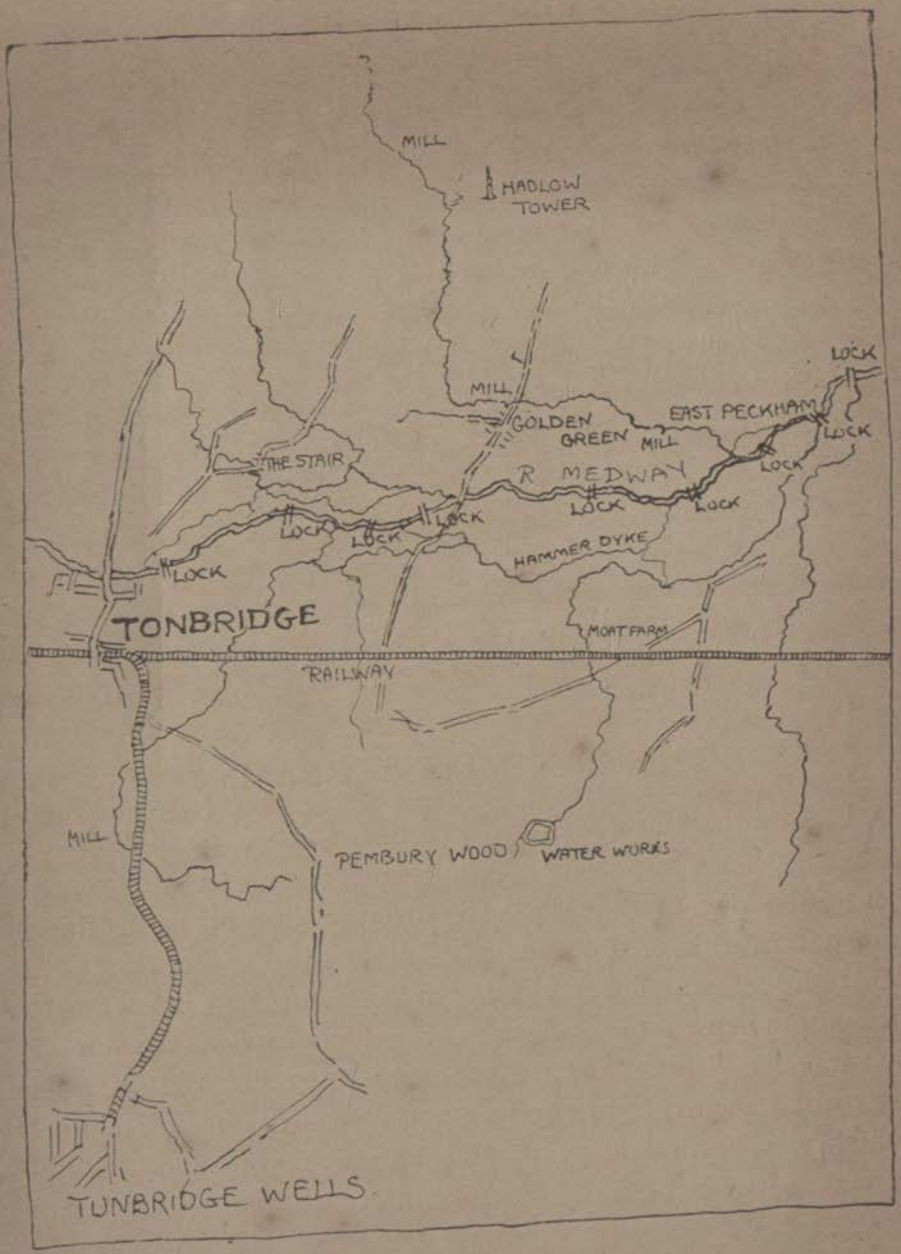
The most enjoyable way of exploring the little river Beult, when there is enough water to do so, is to take a canoe. Of course there is a good deal of land transport and a good deal of argument with indignant land-owners, but these are necessary evils to an otherwise delightful inland voyage.



ON THE BEULT, YALDING.

IX

THE LAND OF STREAMS


MILL
HADLOW TOWER
LOCK
MILL
GOLDEN GREEN
MILL
EAST PECKHAM
LOCK
LOCK
THE STAIR
R MEDWAY
LOCK
LOCK
LOCK
LOCK
LOCK
HAMMER DYKE
LOCK
TONBRIDGE
MOAT FARM
RAILWAY
MILL
PEMBURY WOOD
WATER WORKS
TUNBRIDGE WELLS

THE LAND OF STREAMS

AT 3.0 a.m. I awoke from a troubled sleep to find one of my legs immersed in a lake and the other apparently floating about on a raft. Too drowsy to notice anything unusual in this, I felt vaguely indignant at the situation. My right leg was very cold and my attempts to lift it on to dry land seemed to send the raft which carried my left on spasmodic voyages. I discovered, to my relief, that this leg was still attached to my body though borne about in a manner which was beyond my control. The moon was shining, and it was fairly light. As I awoke more thoroughly, I began

to reason out the phenomenon. We were evidently still in the boat and under the awning that had been put up. Brown was fast asleep. I observed, however, that he was on a higher level than I, a feature I had not noticed in our arrangements when we turned in. Then it occurred to me it would be a good idea to wake him up and ask him what he thought about it all. My efforts to do this roused me completely, and I realized suddenly that the boat was at a steep angle, half full of water and probably sinking.

Brown knew at once what had happened. He dived to turn off some tap or other, and we started baling hard with biscuit tins. The raft on which my leg had gone adrift proved to be one of the large air-cushions that constituted our mattress. As my feet had been kept dry until one of them slipped off this support, we had not felt the flood before it had accumulated to formidable proportions. Dawn had broken before order was restored. The dark masonry of the old bridge, contrasting with the foam-flecked waters of the weir, made a delightful picture.

Sleep, as far as I was concerned, had been fitful before this interruption, but now it seemed little use seeking it. Whenever I began to doze I jumped up, thinking we were at the bottom of the river or adrift or on fire. I had little faith in Brown's boat. If leaving a tap on will sink us, leaving the battery on might electrocute us, and leaving the petrol on might blow up the whole concern.

The sun was high in the sky. As Brown showed no sign of turning out I went for a walk along the river bank.

HADLOW TOWER

Incidentally I met a man with much local information about the part of the Medway we were about to explore. There is a place near Tonbridge called "The Stair"—we should pass it—interesting because it had something to do with smugglers. He seemed very hazy about the period, but I made a mental note of what he told me, for I knew a search for smuggling haunts would delight Brown. It seems a strange place to come across smugglers. They would have to smuggle such a long way, and the chances of being caught between the sea and Tonbridge would be frequent. Possibly, if the story be true, they brought up bogus cargoes and this was a quiet place to run them, a point on the river literally above suspicion.

Breakfast over, we got under way. Through two locks to Branbridges, and then into open country which abounds in wood and innumerable tributary brooks. I have called this chapter "The Land of Streams" because whenever you go on shore you find yourself on an island. Little rivers run out of the main river and in again at will, and the vicinity of the Medway between this point and the shallows above Tonbridge is a network of watercourses. It is a characteristic that is difficult to show by means of drawings, because there is nothing in any one view that gives a clue to the nature of the district. It is a green land, this land of streams, dominated for a long way by the distant spire of Hadlow Castle.

Since this cruise was done the whole of the Medway between Maidstone and Tonbridge has been "up." It is in the hands of engineers undergoing a transformation. Locks have been

enlarged so that barges of one hundred tons can use it. Hitherto vessels of small tonnage only had been able to navigate this section, and the locks had fallen into a very bad state, some of them bearing an ominous notice that they can be worked at the user's risk! Since writing these notes years ago, the reformed and revised Upper Medway has again fallen on evil days, and has an uncertain future.

"The Stair" is a low hill rising from the flat fields within about a quarter of a mile from the river on the right bank. A large red-brick house, some cottages, farm buildings, and a few oasthouses constitute the hamlet. To reach it we had to cross two streams and make a somewhat meandering approach. We found no trace of smuggling, search how we would. Local inquiries resulted in a wild-goose chase to find a ruined mansion of which a few walls and some greenhouses alone remained, but we could get little encouragement and no information. It is wonderful how small is a countryman's knowledge of a thing that he sees every day. I remember once asking an old gardener who worked in the grounds of an abbey, what was the period of the ruin. He told me he thought it was "one o' they old-fashioned places."

"But," I asked, "don't you know about *how* old?"

"Bless ye, sir," he replied right jovially, "I reckon it was built afore *your* time, sir." And then he added, as if it would settle the question of its antiquity, "or *mine* either, for the matter o' that."

The smugglers cave proving a frost, we pushed on and landed at Tonbridge for lunch. This was a piece of diplomacy

THE STAIR, TONBRIDGE

on my part to get Brown keen on Ye Old Chequers Inn, and to suggest later in the day, as if it had been a sudden inspiration, that we should pack our bags and put up there for a bit. Two nights in succession like last night would be too wearing to the constitution.

About a mile above the town there is a tributary river which leads up to some powder-mills. At its junction with the Medway there is a single pair of lock gates. How on earth you could use a lock that possessed only one pair of gates, or how it could even be a lock, neither Brown nor I could determine, nor could any inquiry enlighten us. The water was some feet higher on the inner side and we naturally wondered how a boat could go through. I reproduce here a conversation between Brown and the sluice man which throws some light on the subject—

Brown: Where is the other pair of gates?

Sluice Man: Ain't no other bloomin' gates.

Brown: But how do you open them?

Sluice Man: I opens the bloomin' sluices and that lets out the water, and when the water's level on t'other side the bloomin' gates 'll open.

Brown: But if the water is even on both sides what's the good of the gate?

Sluice Man: 'To keep the bloomin' water up, o' course.

He seemed to resent our thirst for knowledge, so the conversation flagged.

We had seen a ballast lighter drifting down the river, and this came into the bend. The sluices were drawn up, and when the water had dropped on the inner side the gates were opened. As a matter of fact, there was considerable flow in the stream, which meant that the levels were only approximately even. The lighter was hauled through and the gates shut again. The canal regained its former level very soon, and the slow-moving craft proceeded on its way.

We thought over the problem, and decided that the explanation was simple. At the far end of a long reach of water it takes some time for an alteration of the level to be felt. There is tremendous inertia in water. When the sluices are opened, the water near the gates finds an apparent level, although there is a slight drop. By the time the bulk of the water above has felt the change, the barge is through and the gates shut again.

Unless I had seen it, I should not have believed in the efficacy of one pair of gates. The sluice man's explanation would have left me a confirmed sceptic. This thing is a parable, and there is a moral to be found. When people give you an absurd or inadequate explanation of a belief, it does not follow that their belief is not justified.

We went some distance up the main river, but the limit of motor-boat navigation was in sight. It is possible to go

THE STRAIGHT MILE, TONBRIDGE

as far as the Weir, but there is no lock or even rollers for getting boats up. When the river is low there are various possibilities of grounding before this point. One is under the railway bridge, and another is a palisade of snags, sometimes

"THE TWELVE APOSTLES."

known as the Twelve Apostles (see sketch), which will cheerfully knock a hole in your boat or break the propeller, according to the way you approach them. If you succeed in running the gauntlet there are some more traces of a wooden bridge—I don't know what they are called, but we named them the

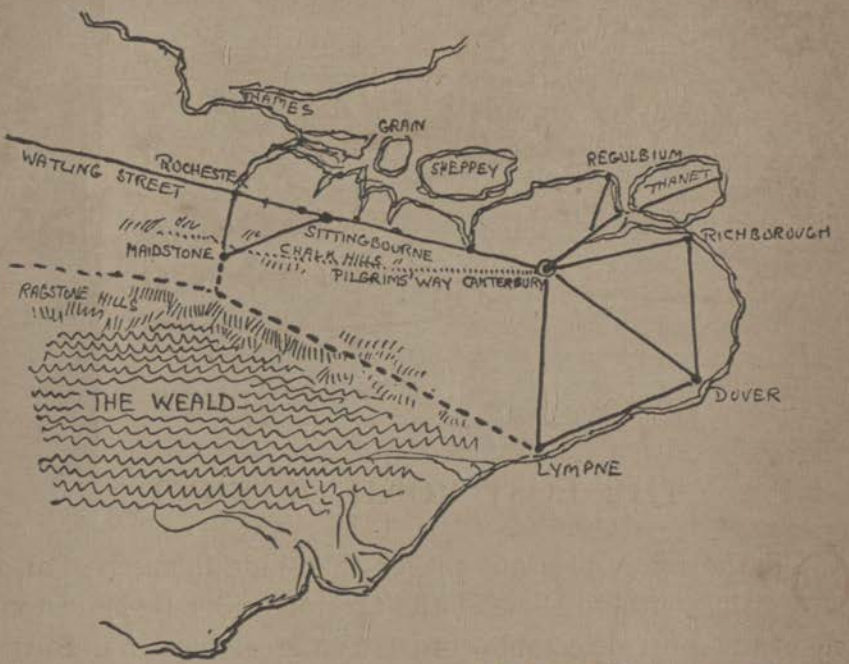
Seven Devils. I think the Apostles are the worst, because they are under water. Judas Iscariot is out of the straight, and this is the one that you do not see in time.

There is another strange thing that the explorer may come upon near Tonbridge. It is a curious, grass-covered trench, starting from near this part of the river, known as The Straight Mile—an attempt, made about a hundred years ago, to extend the navigation of the river in the direction of Penshurst—an attempt which failed.

Our quest was over: we could get no further. We had done our work, and soon we should get the enjoyment. I mean the enjoyment of recollection, for that is often the best part of a cruise. Brown was easily persuaded to get up the local colour of Tonbridge, and we put up at Ye Olde Chequers Inn for a few days.

X

THE LOST ROAD OF KENT



THE SEA COAST AND THE WEALD "COAST"

THE BLACK LINES HERE REPRESENT THE KNOWN ROMAN ROADS AND THE DOTTED LINE A CONJECTURED ROMAN ROAD.

THE LOST ROAD OF KENT

OF the many pleasant places that hide themselves along the southern slope of the ragstone ridge by Maidstone, one of the most delectable corners is a green garden in Sutton Valence. It is right under the ruins of the castle, with broad prospect of the wide Weald of Kent. A spring wells up in the chequered shade of the upper terrace, feeding a lily pond under the trees. This jolly little brook plays hide-and-seek among the clustered flowers; pauses to fill a clear pool here and there, and then hurries on merrily, to make up for lost time. It dives under a lawn, appears again among the roses, and then laughingly loses itself in an orchard below.

It was in this garden, on a warm afternoon in the early summer, that Brown galvanized a whole party of slightly soporific people of both sexes and all ages into red-hot archæologists, bent on the instant discovery of a Roman road.

It happened in this wise. We were a merry party staying with the Thornhills at this most delightful spot I have described. The good Professor, abroad on archæological work, had settled his family here for the summer. Mrs. Thornhill and Betty were in great form with their delightful archæological picnics. Now that the Professor was away the subject of archæology was not even mentioned, but they were just as enjoyable for all that.

The afternoon was hot, just hot enough to make you realize the delightfulness of the dappled sunshine through the trees, and the coolness of the splashing water. We were all more or less abandoned to the delights of the garden and the drowsy consequences of lunch. Mrs. Thornhill was undisguisedly asleep. My better half, Eve, nominally reading a book, was getting very near the same state. Scylla and Charibdis, our family, were doing great damage to the garden by violent pursuit of a tortoiseshell butterfly. I was too drowsy myself to take much notice of their tactics, but the progress of their hunt was borne across the garden in shouts of triumph or disappointment, like "hot" and "cold" in a game of hide-and-seek. It is a strange fact of natural history, as yet not sufficiently noticed by science, that whereas animals and adult human beings tend to become quiet and even sleepy after heavy meals, young children will

eat until they cannot manage any more and then leap about and play tumbling games that would kill less remarkably constituted creatures.

Brown and Betty were examining a large map spread out on the lawn. I think Brown felt it was up to him, now that the Professor was away, to display an interest in the antiquities of Kent, and was consequently trying to enthuse

THE CASTLE, SUTTON VALENCE.

Betty with some historical theories of his about roads in the Weald. In this he seems to have been more successful than the Professor, for I never remember Betty to be so attentive to topographical details. I do not know whether it is necessary for two people looking at a map to put their heads quite so close together, but I suppose the type was small and they wanted to look at the same spot for a considerable period.

After all, it is no business of mine. I pretended to be asleep, and so they had a certain amount of chance. However, I think if I had been Brown, I would have dropped the map business and taken her into the rose garden to look for orchids.

After an interval of something like half an hour, great activity seemed to reign in Brown's archæological department. He, himself, was crawling about on his hands and knees like a sleuth hound, bending over the map and making excited dabs at it. Betty was wildly borrowing pins from Eve and making them into little red flags. These flags Brown stuck all over the map with bits of crimson paper. Scylla and Charibdis substituted their hunt for butterflies into a hunt for pins, and we all woke up and gathered round.

At first I thought Brown had discovered a new menace to the safety of the realm, for his array of red flags looked like an army taking up a position along the ragstone hills from Ashford to Sevenoaks; possibly a line of defence against some attack from the Weald to the south of it. His excitement, however, was so great that the attack must have been coming off this very afternoon and England was totally unprepared.

He pounced upon a straight line of flags and whistled to himself.

"Another," he muttered. "Chartway Street."

"That's only a mile away from here," said Betty.

"Cock Street," added Brown, sticking another flag into the line.

Brown looked up and saw us standing in a semicircle,

looking down somewhat puzzled at the map with its array of war flags. He read off names with great enthusiasm.

"What more do you want?" he exclaimed; "Lympne, Coldharbour, Stonestreet Green, Flood Street, Great Chart, Ford, Rooting Street, Little Chart, Liverton Street, North

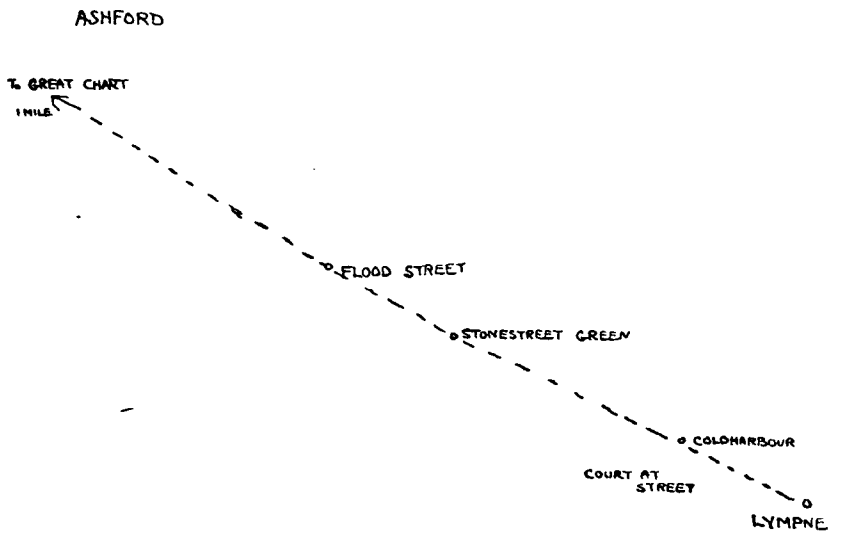


FIG. I.

Street, and *Roman Cemetery*—and so on to Plaxtol by Sevenoaks."

"But what's it all about?" asked Mrs. Thornhill.

Brown stood up. "We have discovered," he said with an air of finality, "a Roman road. It is the lost road of Kent."

I thought it was very nice of Brown to say *we*, including

Betty as partner in the great discovery, although she had merely provided and manufactured multitudinous little red flags. I think, too, Brown deserves tremendous credit in getting on with any archæological research at all under the circumstances. A frightfully pretty girl sitting on the ground alongside a man, with her cheek practically touching his, is not generally conducive to his clear thinking.

"Hilaire Belloc," continued Brown, "says in writing of Kent, that he can find no trace of a Roman road south of the Watling Street. What he means by trace, I don't know. If he means actual sections of road revealing an undoubted Roman origin I expect he is quite right, but there is a good deal of evidence in the names of places. It is unlikely that there were any made roads at all in the Weald in Roman times, although it seems that in the south iron was worked. All this country was an impenetrable tangle of forest; but on the northern side of this tract, along the ridge of hill, one would expect to find some traces of a road.

"Now in the heart of the Weald you will find few place-names indicating possibly Roman occupation, such as Street, Chart, Coldharbour, etc.; but there are many on the ragstone hills. In order to demonstrate this, I stuck pins wherever I could find any name that *might* have some connection with Roman occupation. Coldharbour is generally considered evidence of the Romans. It is a name constantly occurring on known Roman roads. I should say rather the name Coldharbour stands for the *thing* which was Roman, by some, thought to be a shelter for camping, like a hut in the Alps.

The derivation from the French *col d'arbres* has been suggested, a hill of trees. These camping places were often at prominent places where a plantation of trees would show up, hence the word, if this be the correct derivation. Some doubt, however, has been thrown on this derivation as in the north of England similar sites are sometimes named windy arbour. The word Street, in a country place, often tells of Roman work, and Chart, the Latin *charta*, a grant or charter of land, sometimes takes us back to days Roman, although it might also be a name relic of Norman times. In a Saxon document concerning some land near Canterbury in 760 A.D. the name Chart (spelt Cert) is referred to as an old name and thus many of these Charts are evidently Roman. For the first period after the Roman withdrawal from Britain the Saxons were hard put to it to maintain the existing Roman strongholds and ways, and were very unlikely to have built new towns. The fact that a place is referred to (in 760 A.D.) as 'known as cert' is strongly in favour of it being of Roman origin. Individually, there may be no evidence of things Roman because of these names, but collectively the position of these names on the map is striking. Assuming that a good many have no name-place significance there is still remarkable coincidence of such places arranged in a straight line from Lympne towards Maidstone, in fact, roughly a route more or less parallel to the Watling Street.

"When the pins were all in place, as you can see, the inference is evident. If there is anything at all in these names let us follow the course they indicate. Beginning at Lympne, where Stone Street comes down from Canterbury

we have first Coldharbour and Court at Street, then Stonestreet Green, then Flood Street, and by continuing in a straight line north-west, strike Great Chart at a place on the stream marked Ford. Continuing for about a mile we pass a place higher up on the left named Upper Coldharbour, and then come to Rooting Street at Little Chart. A continuation of this straight line would lead us into swampy ground abounding in streams likely to be easily flooded. About two miles to the north of this point, however, by Charing is Swan Street."

"Assuming," Brown went on, "this change of direction, of which the evidence is purely guesswork, and starting off again from Swan Street in a straight line nearly due west we find a remarkable series of names. About two miles on is Water Street, two miles further, Liverton Street, and then another two and a half miles and we are at Chartway Street, a doubly significant name. Then the corner of North Street with its Roman Cemetery just by the school here at Sutton Valence."

We all provided ourselves with data to follow the argument. One of the advantages of staying with the Thornhills is an unlimited supply of maps.

I have since looked up what it was that Mr. Hilaire Belloc did write in case Brown had misquoted him and find the following in *The King's Highway*, December, 1919, in an article entitled 'The Roman Roads.' *"What is interesting, is that the road westward out of Canterbury has been lost; I think lost entirely. It would be of the highest interest to recover it, for it must have formed the link between Kent and Sussex and the lateral communication of the South, but I have never heard any*

evidence to re-establish it, and I do not know of any remains."

I have also verified Brown's statement (page 142) that parish boundaries are strong evidence in looking for a lost Roman road. Here is an extract from the well-known authority on the subject, Codrington, in his *Roman Roads in Britain.*

"It is well known that the ridges of Roman roads were often made the boundary between parishes and townships; and boundaries follow roads which are certainly Roman for many miles together. On Watling Street, south of London, from Midbrook over Shooter's Hill, and through Dartford, parish boundaries run along *seven and a half out of twelve miles,* and on the north of London parish boundaries follow Watling Street along the Edgware Road continuously for five miles, from Oxford Street to the river Brent, and again for two miles after an interval of one and a half miles, or for seven out of eight and a half miles."

We made Brown keep quiet for a time and studied the country furiously. He was not going to have it all his own way; Mrs. Thornhill and Eve started a rival theory of the lost road. They contended that it obviously did nothing so silly as altering its course to the north, but kept away from the stream (the Great Stour) on higher ground and marched nearly straight to Chartway Street.

I have shown the rival theories in Fig. 2, marking Brown's road as A, and Mrs. Thornhill's as B. I then chipped in myself with a theory, and taking a cautious eclectic line,

borrowing points from either side, proving that they were *both* probably right. No doubt the Romans had tried Brown's road, but, finding that the Great Stour in winter kept the whole place under water, got fed up with it. They named part of it Rotten Street or Rotting Street (hence Rooting), another part Swan Street because only aquatic birds could use it, and another section Water Street for obvious reasons.

Then they hit on the idea of using Mrs. Thornhill's road as an alternative. Edging away to the west a little, on firmer and higher ground, they made a fresh start, and called it New Street, through Upper Coldharbour, as Lower Coldharbour was under water, past Dowle Street, crossing a stream at one point only, Stonebridge, to Chartway Street. I have not as yet received any recognition from the Royal Society for thus harmonizing the two sides of the Brown-Thornhill controversy, but it was voted as jolly good by everybody. Having safely arrived at Chartway Street in complete harmony we continued to sit at Brown's feet.

"A large scale map is now very instructive," continued Brown, producing two sheets (Kent, sheet LIII., N.W., and Kent, sheet LII., N.E.), now quite excited in following his argument.

"It is a well-known rule," continued Brown, "when hunting for the position of Roman roads to pay great attention to parish boundaries, as often the road was the division between two parishes. To the west of Chartway Street, the road and the parish boundary run together and then by Chart Corner we come, a mile further on, to Cock Street. Now it does not

follow that where the present road coincides with a Roman road that the track is exactly the same. In many cases the old Roman work was used as a quarry for material for making the more modern road, and in many cases also local con-

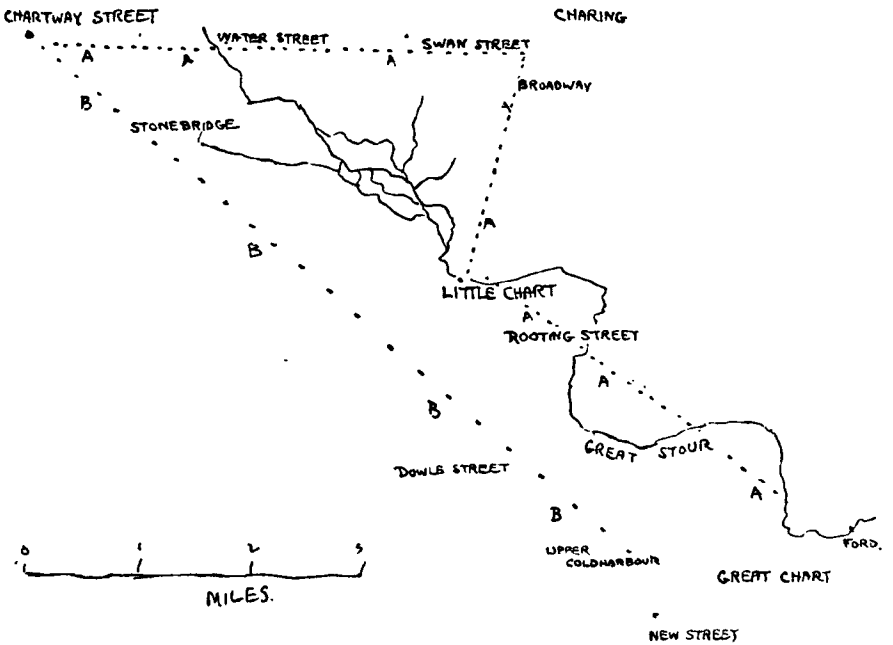


FIG. 2.

siderations had arisen to make it desirable to take the road along a slightly different bit of country near. About 700 yards west of the cross roads at Cock Street and about 300 yards south of the school is the boundary stone at the corner of the parish of Linton. The road is almost dead straight as we

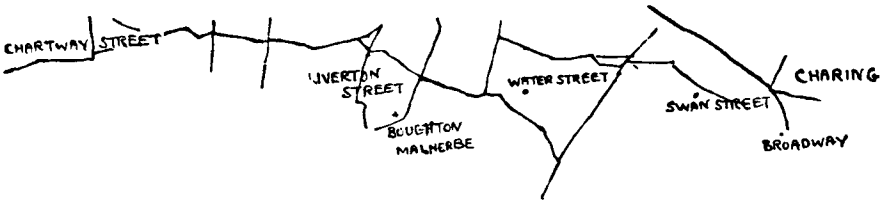


FIG. 3.

proceed west. Parallel to it and at a short distance from it is this parish boundary of Linton. It is at this zone of the road that trenching would be most likely to succeed. I mean the digging of a trench at right angles to the supposed site of the road so that we could find any traces of a causeway that might be there, although it is quite possible that this way, being on firm ground, might never have been metalled. For a distance at Cox Heath it coincides with the road, as does the boundary of Hunton which continues it. For nearly five miles these parish boundaries either run very near or actually coincide with the road. Then the road goes off at a tangent by Quarry Wood, but the parish boundary continues in the direction of the Medway and Wateringbury."

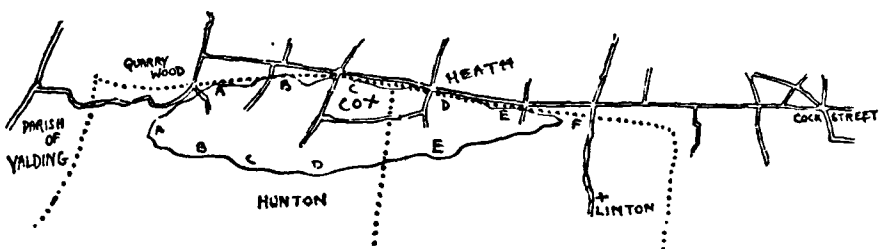


FIG 4.

"Here," said Brown, with a certain amount of pride. "my pet lost road of Kent vanishes for want of evidence and probably because of the river crossing. However, it is last seen making straight for Plaxtol, which is five miles further on and rich in Roman remains.

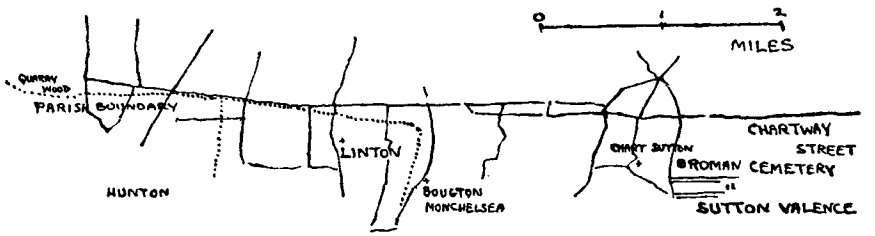


FIG. 5.

Like one man we all joined up and put ourselves at Brown's disposal as auxiliaries in the discovery of Roman roads. We would start at once. Never, since the great day, or rather, night, when Brown led us from Rochester on our pilgrimage to Canterbury had there been so much enthusiasm.

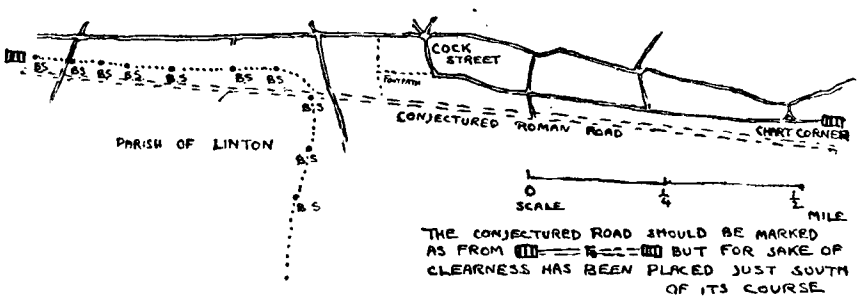
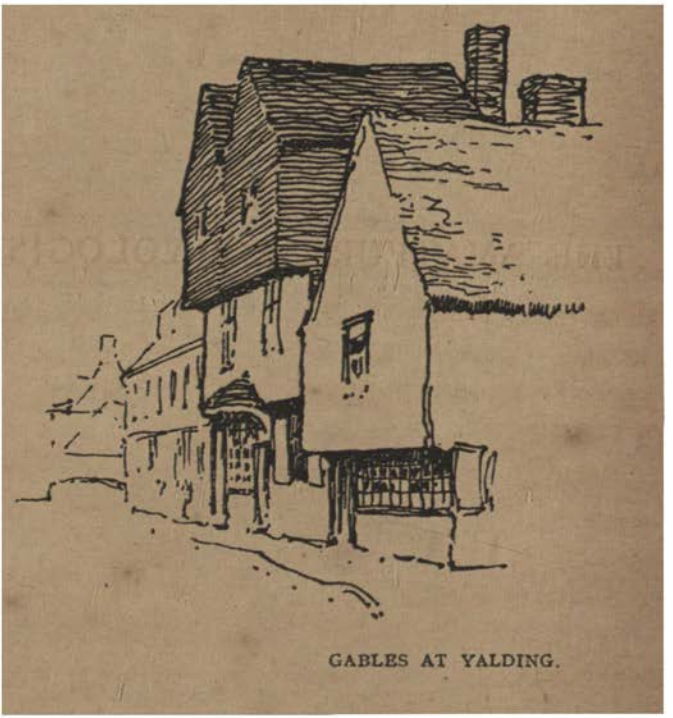

COCK STREET
CONJECTURED ROMAN ROAD
CHART CORNER
PARISH OF LINTON
BS
SCALE
MILE
THE CONJECTURED ROAD SHOULD BE MARKED AS FROM ... BUT FOR SAKE OF CLEARNESS HAS BEEN PLACED JUST SOUTH OF ITS COURSE

FIG. 6.

Tea was a meal symbolic of impending action. With staves in our hands, and with our loins girded, did we eat. We took few provisions for the journey and we made no plans.

It was sufficient that we were about to startle the archæological world with our discoveries, and so, with a small car grossly overloaded as means of transport, we started out from Sutton Valence at 5 p.m. in the direction of Chartway Street



GABLES AT YALDING.

XI
THE AMATEUR ARCHÆOLOGISTS

SUTTON VALENCE.

THE AMATEUR ARCHÆOLOGISTS

THE pursuit of a Roman road on a map has many advantages over the method of outdoor exploration. A false scent does not entail much delay and the general directions of bits of road are so much clearer on paper than in places where buildings, hills, and trees can interrupt the view. A comparison, for instance, between the rival claims of Brown's road and Mrs. Thornhill's can be made in a few minutes on a large scale map, but when we came to run over the ground in our much overloaded car we could make very little of it. Hedges, clumps of bushes, and all sorts of things not apparent

on the map rendered the verification of our theories lengthy, difficult, and often impossible. After a few hours of it we retraced our way to Chartway Street. From this place, travelling west, the road is the northern boundary of East Sutton. After half a mile we came to a kink and continued, the road still forming the parish boundary for another three-quarters of a mile.

Mrs. Thornhill and Eve strongly objected to this kink. Well-behaved Roman roads did not go in for kinks, except in very unusual circumstances, as in the case of Stone Street from Lympne to Canterbury.

We all developed the gravest doubts about Brown's road and felt that Brown would have to look out with such keen critics around him. We would not be put off with airy generalizations. If this were indeed the track of a Roman road which had also been the parish boundary, how did Brown explain the kink? There was no reason for it, such as the steep hill in Stone Street near Lympne. There was no doubt about it, Brown had been going a little too far, trying to palm off a road on us with insufficient evidence.

He made a spirited defence, however, and introduced a new theory. It was to the effect that when a Roman road was also a parish boundary there would be comparatively few boundary stones along its course. In subsequent years a later road, for various reasons, would not follow it exactly, hence numerous bends and turns for purely local reasons Thus the parish boundary, still reckoned by the road, would cease to be straight; but the fixed points might still be in a straight line. To

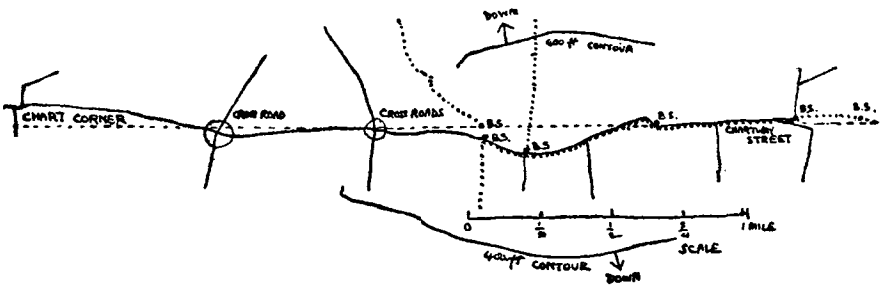


FIG. 7.

illustrate this he took a sheet of a large scale map (Kent, sheet LIII., N.W.), and proceeded to mark off the existing boundary stones, five in number, along the northern limit of the parish of East Sutton. The effect was startling when he ruled a line through four of them. They were dead straight in spite of the road's winding course. In Fig. 8 you can see it for yourself. Two of these boundary stones are left out, falling out of alignment to the south. This, Brown explained, was probably because they were markings of later date made at points where the parish boundary crossed the present road and was, after all, not at the corner like stone A. He held that, if his theory of the track of the Roman road is right, the points XX would have probably been the original boundary.

The space, ABCX in Fig. 8, is certainly a very curious one. If the road ever ran from the boundary stone at A to the one at D as surmised, then it is natural to expect the

boundary FC to have ended with the road at X. When the later road was made to curve down at BCD the whole space ABCD would be included in the northern parish. In the next diagram this course of conjectured road is extended by dotted line to Chart Corner. Note that this piece of country is right at the top of the ridge. I have indicated the 400 foot contour on either side (Fig. 7).

I nearly launched out with a discovery of my own. Brown had apparently not noticed that the second turning to the left after Chartway Street is named Friday Street. Had it not been getting so late in the day I should probably have evolved an entirely fresh Roman road running south from this point to Wheeler's Street, some four miles on, by Headcom, and ended up with great feasibility at a farm about a mile further on bearing the name Cold Harbour; but I thought better of it. I did not expect, knowing Brown, we should any of us get home to-night, as it was, and one Roman road was quite enough at a time.

We all declared our conversion to Brown's reasoning, and passed a sort of informal vote of confidence in his leadership, pursuing our quest with renewed vigour. We stopped and consulted the map again. A curious thing now becomes apparent. There are two roads, almost parallel, some 200 to 300 yards apart. The lower road runs for a mile and a quarter and then turns at right angles, northwards, to the five cross roads at Cock Street. From Cock Street, for over two miles, there is a perfectly straight run of road with one very slight change of direction for over four miles. But note this,

THE MEDWAY AT YALDING

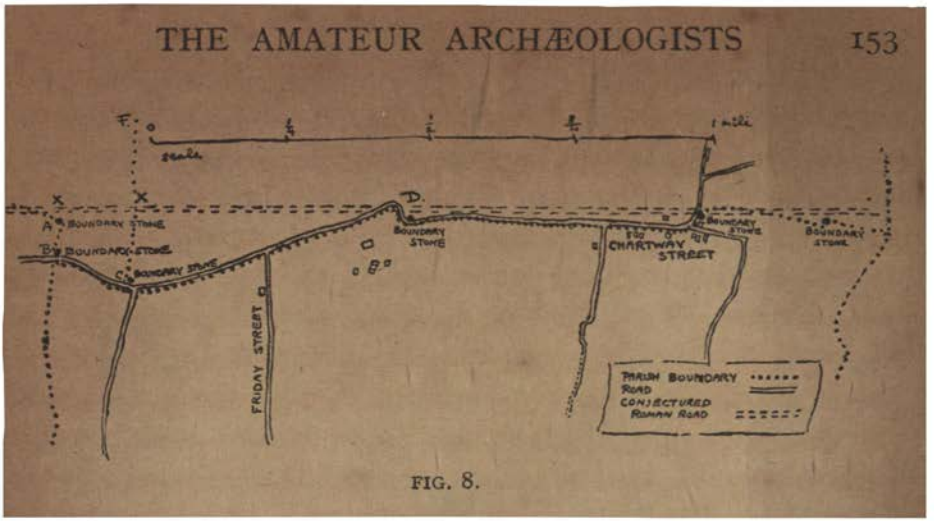


FIG. 8.

that if a line be projected straight on at this right-angle turn of the lower road to Cock Street we jump across a distance of 1000 yards and find ourselves on the parish boundary of Linton, exactly 200 yards south of this straight piece of the modern road and keep straight on parish boundaries for four and a half miles, following the modern road or coinciding with it until it ends abruptly in a road running at right angles. But, wonderful to relate, when this road unaccountably changes its direction the parish boundary *goes straight on* into Quarry Wood, aiming for a point on the river by Nettlestead where the 50 foot contour lines on each side of the Medway are barely 200 yards apart.

We felt now that the Roman road could not possibly escape us and tore onwards, much exceeding the speed limit and causing considerable astonishment to the other road motorists, who did not know that we were makers of history and consequently not to be judged by ordinary standards.

When we reached the T corner by Quarry Wood we turned to the left and then to the right again, coming out on the crest of the hill above Yalding, looking down on a magnificent panorama of the Weald of Kent. To the right, lay the distant chalk hills along which runs the Pilgrim's Way, and ahead of us the narrow neck of valley where the Medway passes Nettlestead. We called a halt and rested for a while. Some giants were moving to and fro among the poles, training up the vines or mending damaged strings. I think it will be well to give a sketch, made earlier in the year, of these supermen at "stringing," and incidentally to write something about hops for the benefit of the vistor to Kent.

Most people's interest in hops begins and ends with beer. The denizens of East London, however, have an annual experience of country life on their own account, when whole families go a-picking. Yet in Kent, "a land of hops and poppy-mingled corn," the interest in hops is a perpetual one, for these vineyards of the north, as they may be called, need work upon them for the whole round of the year.

As soon as the picking is over—in the case of late varieties, not till October—the land must be turned and manured. It is sometimes ploughed, but this is rare, as the poles and wires make all sorts of difficulties. Then the roots of the vines are pruned. In April the shoots, thin reddish tendrils, can be seen pushing their way up through the earth.

There are many methods of training the vines, all variants of arrangements with poles, wire, and strings. The poles are from twelve to sixteen feet high, and "stringing," as well as

THE GIANTS OF YALDING.

numerous other operations, necessitate the use of stilts. The effect of giants striding about among the poles, as shown here on the ridge above Yalding, is curious and startling. The performance, as may be imagined, requires no little skill, and is irresistibly reminiscent of a music-hall turn.

The alternative to this high-level performance is the placing of a ladder against the hops, and a continual descending, moving, and ascending again—a process in a day's work which becomes far more tiring than the difficult walking progress which is shown here.

The hop-vine is a prodigious grower, averaging something like a foot a week, or one-sixteenth of an inch per hour, and taking about five months to reach maturity. During this period it is attacked by insects, and incessant war is waged between the cultivator and the aphis, a small green fly. To get rid of this pest, a solution of soft soap and water is sprayed on the plants from a hose, either by means of a horse machine that sprays automatically in all directions as it travels along, or by a tank on wheels, with hand pump, which supplies hoses to be directed by workers among the vines. It is generally said that hops are behaving themselves properly when they reach the top of the poles by the longest day.

When the hops are picked they are taken and placed in the oast-houses, which are kilns for the purpose of curing the hops. An open grid floor of wood is built across the structure, and on this is stretched a horsehair carpet to keep the hops from being burnt. A fire is kindled underneath, and the smoke, which will contain a certain amount of sulphur, will

have the effect of killing any insect life and giving the hops a golden-brown colour. Nice coloured hops, like brown eggs, are more saleable commodities than poor coloured ones, but it is doubtful whether there is any great virtue really in the exact colour of either. The hops, during this process, are

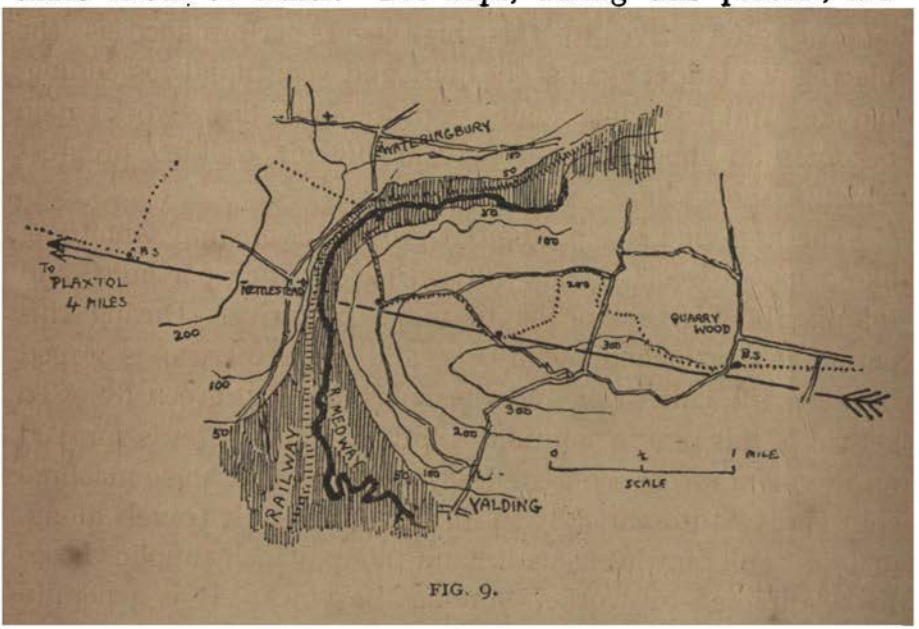


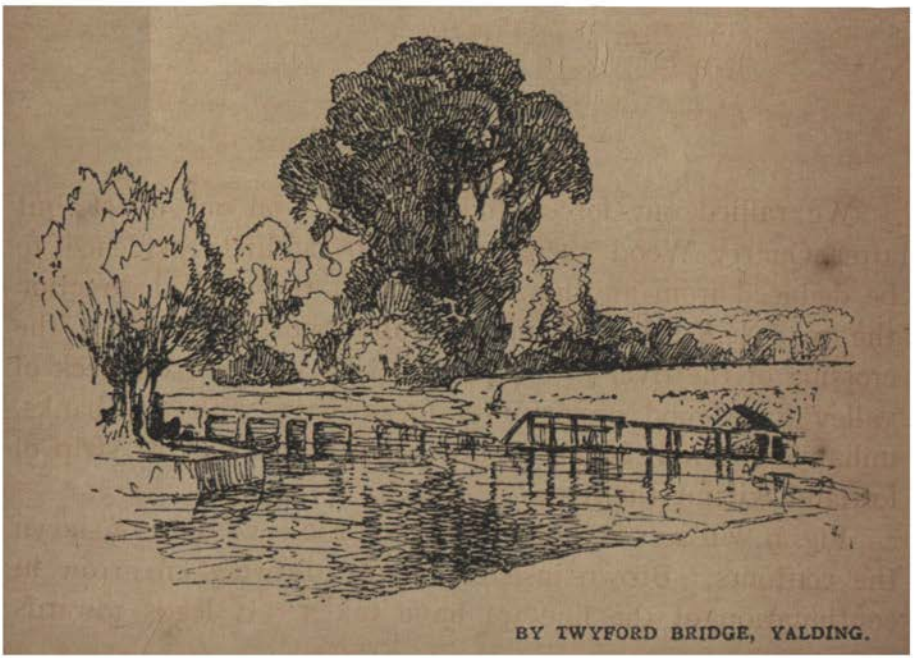
FIG. 9.

turned by men with wooden shovels to ensure the proper curing of every part of them.

I cannot claim to be one of those who would be very hard hit if this country were to go dry, but I do feel that the beer of old England is the cause of much that is picturesque in our country-side—the woodland clearings, where the poles are

being barked and tipped with creosote, the green avenues of a clustering hop garden—especially when they border a river, and the quaint oast-houses, "bosomed high in tufted trees." The world of Kent and Sussex would lose much of its character were it without these things.

Of the many varieties of hops the three principal groups are Prolific, the earliest to mature, ready to be picked by the end of August, Goldings, ready in the month of September, and Colegates, the latest to ripen, and often picked as late as October. Growers often arrange to have different kinds so that the picking period is spread over some weeks, and the number of pickers required simultaneously is less.



BY TWYFORD BRIDGE, YALDING.

A RIVERSIDE HOP GARDEN.

We rallied our forces and proceeded on our quest, but after. Quarry Wood there seemed to be little evidence to be deduced from anything except that the general direction the road had been taking was an opportune one for the crossing of the river at a point where a very narrow neck of valley gave good opportunity for a ferry with dry banks, unliable to flood, facing each other across a narrow strip of lowland skirting the river.

Fig. 9 will serve to illustrate the problem. I have shown the contours. Brown insisted on my drawing an arrow in continuation of the line we have taken. It leads towards

Plaxtol and keeps more or less hobnobbing with parish boundaries. I think myself that the ascent at Nettlestead, if this straight line were rigidly adhered to, would be rather too steep, even for the Romans, but there is no reason why the line should not be broken, especially at a ferry. There are plenty of instances of Roman roads winding up and down hills, and sometimes following the crests of a ridge in order to keep to the same level. If you will look on the map (Fig. 9) and measure off a distance of half an inch to the right of Nettlestead Church, you will find a boundary stone marked with a dot. To the right of this mark, if you will measure three-quarters of an inch again, you will find another.

The dotted line shows the present boundary coinciding with the present road.

But let us suppose, for the sake of argument, that the boundary stones are old marks and the road has been taken in a curve to avoid the steepness of the rise, which the Romans never seemed to mind, you will notice that the stones exactly follow the straight line of our conjectural road.

RATS CASTLE, NEAR MEREWORTH.

With a large scale map you will find that this section of road, *where there are no houses and where no village has ever been, still bears the name of Hunt Street.*

When we had dis-

covered this fact we gave a vigorous cheer and proceeded, after crossing the river by the bridge at Wateringbury, to locate another boundary stone (showing here on the left of Fig. 9).

"FAIR ROSAMOND'S BOWER," WESTENHANGER.

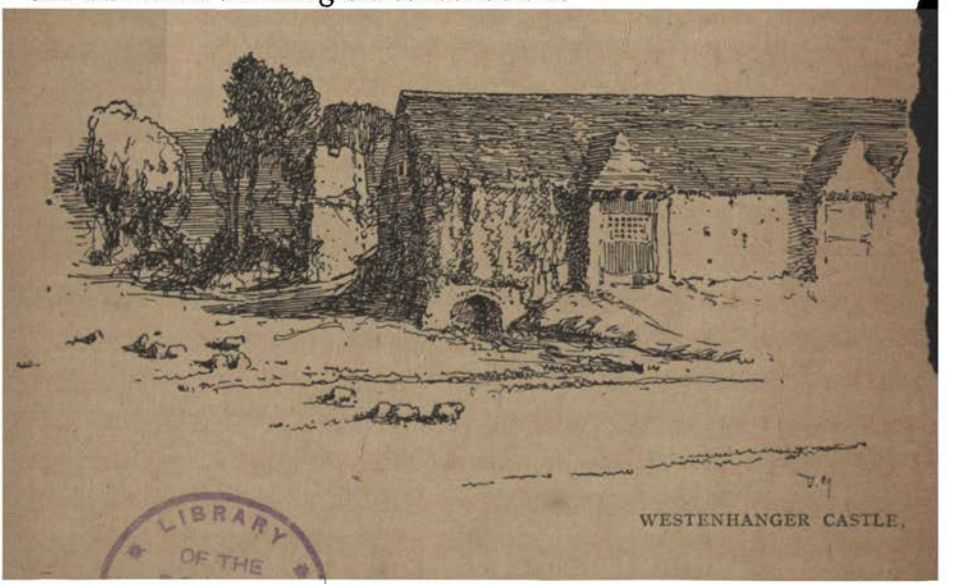
I have not space here to go into details about Mereworth and West Peckham, but give a small sketch of an old house rejoicing in the name of Rats Castle. There are many houses in Kent bearing this curious name, which is generally supposed to have been given in derision because of centuries of neglect.

There is another name, Spider's Castle, which seems to justify this derivation. I am unskilled, as I have said before, in these place-name problems, but I wonder whether the Saxons brought with them the word *Rath*, as in the German *Rathaus*.

Well, to end the story of the great discovery. Night fell and we became less and less scientific, until we reached Oldbury Camp *vîâ* Plaxtol. The urgent need for food made us decide without controversy that this was as far as we need go. Let others carry on the work. We at least had done our bit; so we ordered everything that could be obtained at the local inn and fell to. We were convinced that this Lost Road, now found, could take care of itself.

There is many a true word spoken in jest. Although I have told the tale of our amateur quest with all its crudities and uncritical enthusiasm, I submit that the evidence, much of which is put forward for the first time, is of importance and in the hands of a trained archæologist might lead to definite results. Evidence is evidence, whether arrived at by a ludicrous or a serious method of collection.

Although on Stone Street and off the track of our conjectured road, I have sketched the picturesque remains of Westenhanger Castle near Lmypne, and by Brown's special request included Fair Rosamond's Bower (traditional), a ruin which is probably some 300 years too late to have acted in so romantic a capacity. This same tower shows to the left of the barn-like building sketched below.

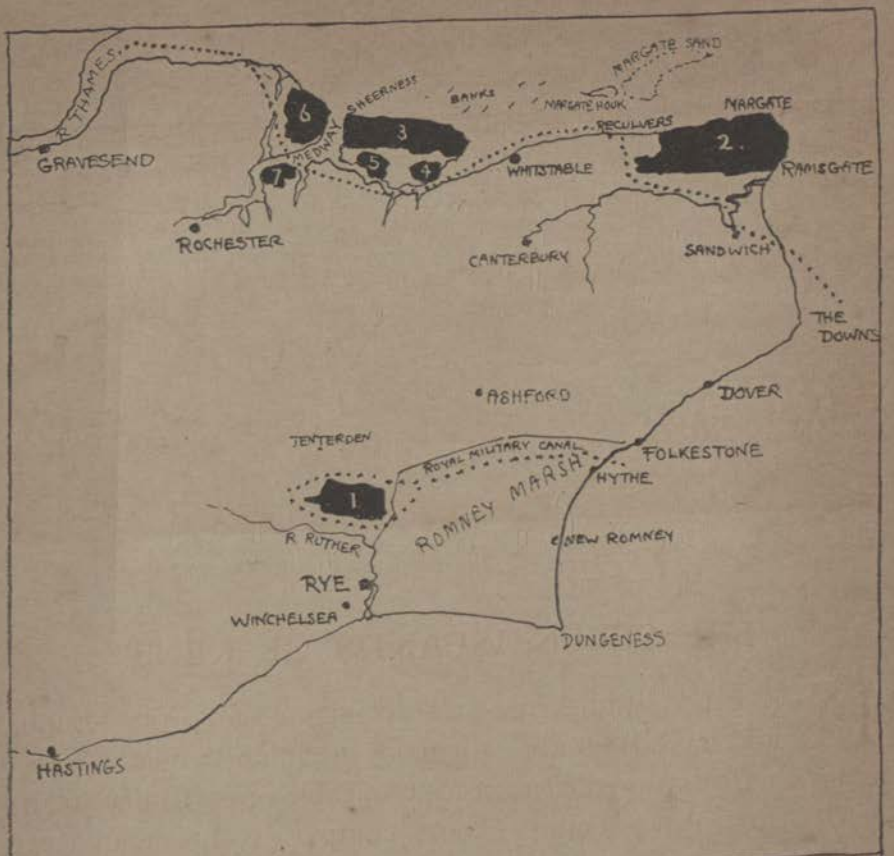


WESTENHANGER CASTLE.

LIBRARY OF THE

XII

THE SEVEN ISLANDS OF KENT



1. OXNEY 2. THANET 3 SHEPPEY 4 HARTY 5. ELMLEY
6. GRAIN 7. BURNTWICK

..... INDICATES ROUTE TAKEN BY SHIPS FROM LONDON TO THE DOWNS: ALSO CHANNELS INTO THE WEALD NEAR TENTERDEN

THE SEVEN ISLANDS OF KENT

MINSTER IN SHEPPEY.

THE SEVEN ISLANDS OF KENT

IN the early Middle Ages, a ship setting sail from London would have been able to make an inland voyage nearly as far as Deal, and then wait a favourable opportunity to slip across to France. Ships were comparatively small craft then, not, in fact, very different in calibre to the sailing barges that still use the only part of this route still navigable—the Swale, which divides Sheppey from the mainland of Kent.

A glance at the map will show how this sheltered cruise was made. The dotted line represents the sea-route as it was then. Keeping a course inside the Isle of Grain, entering the estuary by the now much-narrowed inlet known as Yantlet

Creek, a vessel would keep across the wide waters of the Medway, through the region now known as Chetney Marshes, then open water, and take the course inside Sheppey. This course was more or less where the Swale now lies, emerging by Whitstable. In those days the land beyond Warden Point stretched out several miles, and it is probable that many of the banks ending in the shoals now known as Margate Hook and Margate Sands were marshes and saltings. Thus sheltered water would extend to Reculvers, where the broad estuary of the Wantsum cut off the Isle of Thanet.

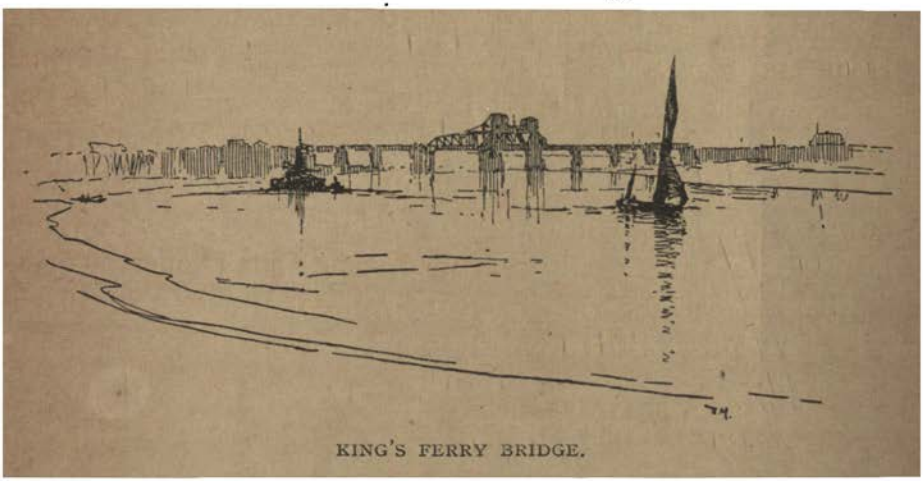
Coming out by Sandwich into the Stour, which then flowed into the sea near Deal, and not, as it does now, by Pegwell Bay, there only remained some thirty miles of open sea before reaching the coast of France. But first of all let us set out a list of the Kentish islands. Here they are—

Oxney
Thanet
Sheppey
Harty
Elmley
Grain
Burntwick.

Oxney, now an island only in name and surrounded on all sides by a level tract of rich, green pasture land, was an island, in fact, till the inning of the marshes cut it off more and more from the Rother and the sea. It reached its palmiest days about the latter end of Elizabeth's reign. Thanet

approached nearest to the mainland at Sarre, and Sarre Wall, on which the road runs to-day, no doubt became a causeway at the narrowest section known as the Ferry.

I should imagine an almost exact parallel to-day could be found in the road that leads from the mainland to the island of Foulness in Essex. A causeway, uncovered at low



KING'S FERRY BRIDGE.

water, makes a dry road, but at high tide there is sufficient depth to allow the passage of barges or small ships.

I remember, during the war, a horse and cart were swept away by a rising tide on this causeway, I don't know under what circumstances. The horse was drowned, and it was thought locally that no trace of either horse or cart had been found. I could spin a yarn, however, about the sequel. It is one of my war stories, not so dull as some, so I will set it out in full.

The Story of the Imperishable Horse

Once upon a time, when I had temporarily given up being an artist to become a horribly handsome naval officer, I was defending the shores of this so-called country against the ravages of the Germans. In order to do this most effectively I was put in command of a Motor Launch and given a patrol on the coast of Essex and a lot of petrol. Besides providing mild amusement to the visitors to Southend, who generally referred to the M. L. as a submarine, and mild excitement every time she caught fire, we searched for mines, retrieved torpedoes, salved seaplanes, and delivered picture postcards to the Mouse light-vessel.

Now, one day a signal was received from a destroyer that some wreckage had been sighted near Foulness. Apparently it was in water too shallow for her to investigate, so the M. L. was told off to find out what it was. She could make out nothing in the failing light, but on the next morning a cart with a dead horse harnessed in it appeared off the pier at Southend. This was probably the "wreckage" referred to.

We salved the cart and unharnessed the dead horse, towing it out to sea to dispose of it as best we could. We did not realize for a long time how difficult this was going to be. We had target practice at it and riddled it with all sorts of projectiles. We tried ramming it, but had to desist for fear of breaking our stem. At last we had to make a kind of big-meshed net with cord, weighted all round with such heavy objects as we could find on board. This seemed to do the

A NOCTURNE OF MARGATE ROADS

ALONGSIDE "ACTÆON."

trick, and we had the satisfaction of seeing the whole thing thus weighted sink out of sight, and, as we thought, out of mind.

A few days afterwards, a report from the captain of an incoming ship described a floating mine with three horns as in the vicinity of the Shivering Sand. *Actæon* unleashed her hounds and we tore over, great and small loud yelling for our prey. Of course it proved to be our horse. I had to report to the Admiralty the circumstances of my temerity in allowing a horse from Southend to be there when it had once been in my keeping, dead or alive. My instructions were to dispose of it. The tone of the order suggested that I insisted on keeping dead horses, in spite of all advice to the contrary, on purpose to cause confusion in shipping circles, a habit which must be discontinued forthwith.

Well, it is a long story. We used hundredweight upon hundredweight of sinkers, but nothing seemed to keep the horse permanently at the bottom of the sea. It would wash up on a bank and the surf would tear away our netting.

Again and again the horse turned up, although it was not apparently again reported to the Admiralty.

Now, during the war, even against an unscrupulous foe, it has been the pride of every naval officer to keep his hands

SEA REACH, CALM.

clean. I have to confess, however, that I once hit below the belt, not against the enemy, but, more is the shame, against a brother officer. Regardless of the awful responsibility that I took, I ordered the horse to be taken in tow, and against a flood tide reached the extreme limits of my patrol at high water. Then the horse was let go, and with six hours' spring tide to help it would inevitably be thrust well into the

Harwich patrol. We never heard of it again, so it is possible that the great wrong that I intended to do was overruled by Providence.

Each of these seven Kentish islands has some particular characteristic. Oxney I have described elsewhere. Thanet,

SEA REACH, FRESH.

with its proper seaside resorts, might be called the Island of Holidays. Sheppey is the Island of Flying. Harty and Elmley are now parts of Sheppey, one having a noticeable height across the flat islands and the other noted as one of the most thinly populated parishes in England. There is a story told that the school there boasted four pupils, three of which were the children of the schoolmistress.

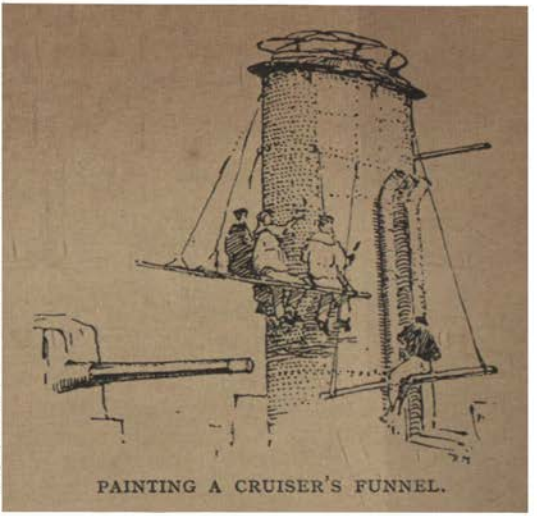
THIS IS NOT MEANT TO BE A COMIC PICTURE. IT SIMPLY SHOWS WHAT CURIOU
THINGS PEOPLE WILL DO FOR PLEASURE.

Grain might now be called the home of the seaplane and Burntwick is quite an upstart, but its war record brings it into line with the proudest of Kent's islands. I may be prejudiced person, as during a great part of the war I was on of *Actæon's* hounds, and Burntwick island, although so small was part of H.M.S. *Actæon.* It is a little bit of "inned" marsh and was piled with nets and sweeps and depth-charges for the trawlers and drifters which swept the sea-road to London.

The Isle of Grain is now an island only in name. The road and the Hundred of Hoo railway to Port Victoria, and the general silting-up of the saltings and the upper end of Yantlet Creek have hidden the fact that it ever was one.

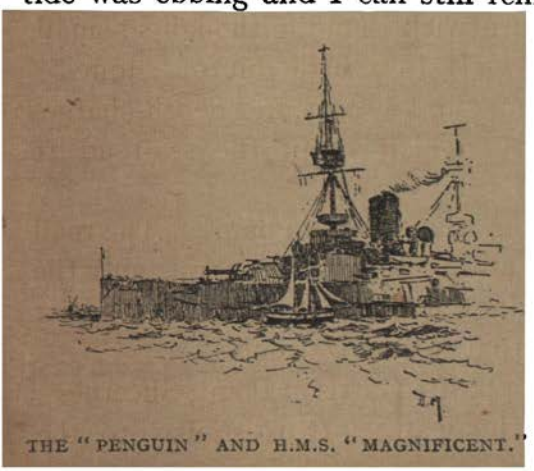
By Grain Fort, and just opposite Garrison Point, Sheerness, stands a lonely tower in the water. It is similar to the

Martello towers of the south coast. From this point was built a pier during the war, and a boom defence to close the Medway.



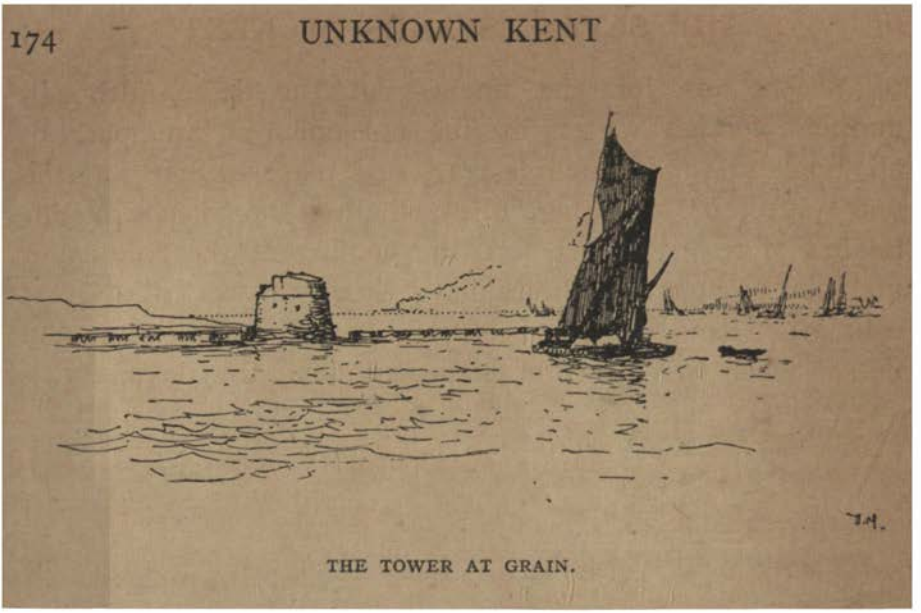
PAINTING A CRUISER'S FUNNEL.

On the whole the Island of Grain is not an exciting place in which to dwell, though it enjoys wide views of sea and sky and a river-bank silhouette of warships, lying at anchor. There is an astonishing amount of mud on the sea-reach side, where the island faces Southend. I remember anchoring there once in the *Penguin*, having failed to make Sheerness. The tide was ebbing and I can still remember an idiotic attempt to get various stores on board from the island. In another tide we could have got them at Sheerness, but it is amazing what hideous discomfort human beings will endure if only they can persuade themselves that they are doing it for pleasure.



THE "PENGUIN" AND H.M.S. "MAGNIFICENT."

From the entrance to



THE TOWER AT GRAIN.

the Medway at Grain barges going Margate way can take what is known as the "overland" route along the shores of Sheppey. It is a pleasant run with a shallow-draft vessel, under steep shores of red clay, tumbling in picturesque ruggedness into the sea. At Warden Point there stood, within living memory, the ruins of a church, but it has long since disappeared. I remember a gruesome story told me by the skipper of a barge, that his father remembered seeing skeletons stalking out from the crumbling cliff which was part of the churchyard.

The name Sheppey means the island of sheep. Lambarde wrote of this region in the sixteenth century as follows:— "It shoulde seeme, by the dedication of the name, that this Islande was long since greatly esteemed either for the number

of Sheepe, or for the fineness of the fleece, although aunsient foreign writers ascribe not much to any part of all England—and much less to this place—either for the one respect or the other. But whether the Sheepe of this Realme were in prize before the coming of the Saxons or no, they be now (God be thanked therefore) worthy of great estimation, both for the exceeding fineness of the fleeshe and fleese (which passeth all other in Europe at this daye, and is

RECULVERS AND MARGATE HOOK.

to bee compared withe the aunsient delicate wool of Tarentum, or the Golden Fleese of Colchos itself) and for the abundant store of flockes so increasing everywhere, that not only this little Isle, but the whole Realme also, might be called Sheepey."

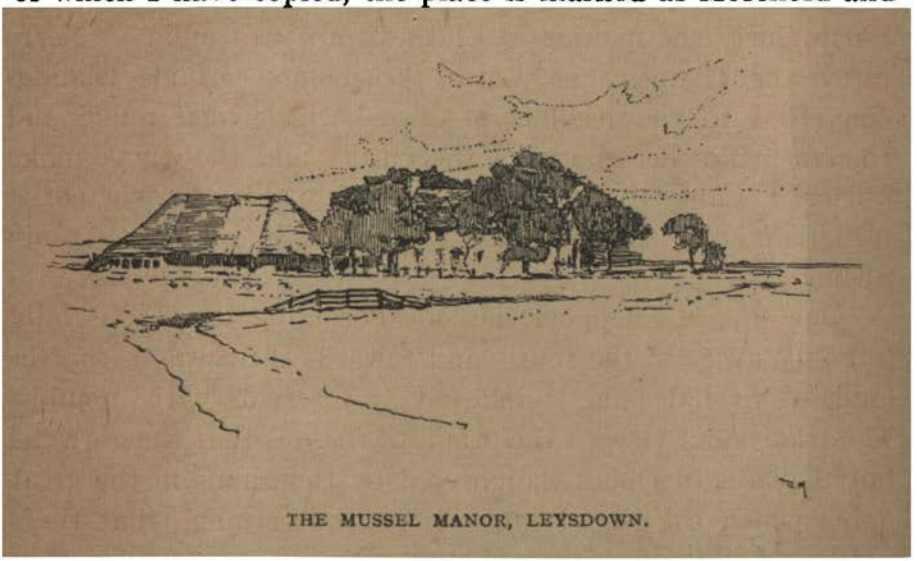
Norden, in 1593, alludes to an industry which has now died out, namely the making of Cheese from ewes milk. "Neere untoe the Thames," he writes, "there are certaine Islandes converted to the feeding of ewes, which men milke and thereof make cheese, and of the curdes and the wheye make butter." Camden also says, "This Isle of Sheepe, whereof it feedeth mightie great flockes, was called by our auncestours Shepey."

One side of Sheppey, the side bordering the sea, is hilly but falls away to the south and towards the Swale is marsh-land. This flat land is relieved at intervals with mounds. The traditional view of the origin of these is that they are the burial places of Danes slaughtered by thousands in the great fights which the island saw. If so, it is strange that these battles should have occurred with extraordinary regularity in the neighbourhood of ditches constructed long since for the draining of the marshes. Also it seems sufficient Danes must have been slain to account for half the population of England at the time these sanguinary contests took place.

It seems more probable that the earth from these dykes accounts for the hillocks. There is to be found growing in the marshes of the Swale, and said (on what authority I do

not know) to grow nowhere else, a low-growing plant with a dull red bloom known as Dane's Blood.

Almost at the extreme eastern end of the island, at Leysdown, stands an old house, now called the Mussel Manor. It is a historical place in two ways. In an ancient map, a portion of which I have copied, the place is marked as Mosehold and



THE MUSSEL MANOR, LEYSDOWN.

it stood on a creek which divided it from a marshy island, Schotton.

This island has long since become part of Sheppey and the house now looks over a sea of grass.

In 1907 it became historical in another way. The Hon. Charles Rolls, Mr. Moore-Brabazon, Mr. Frank McLean, Mr. Ogilvy, and others, and the brothers Short, began making more English history. The brothers, Wright, too, the great

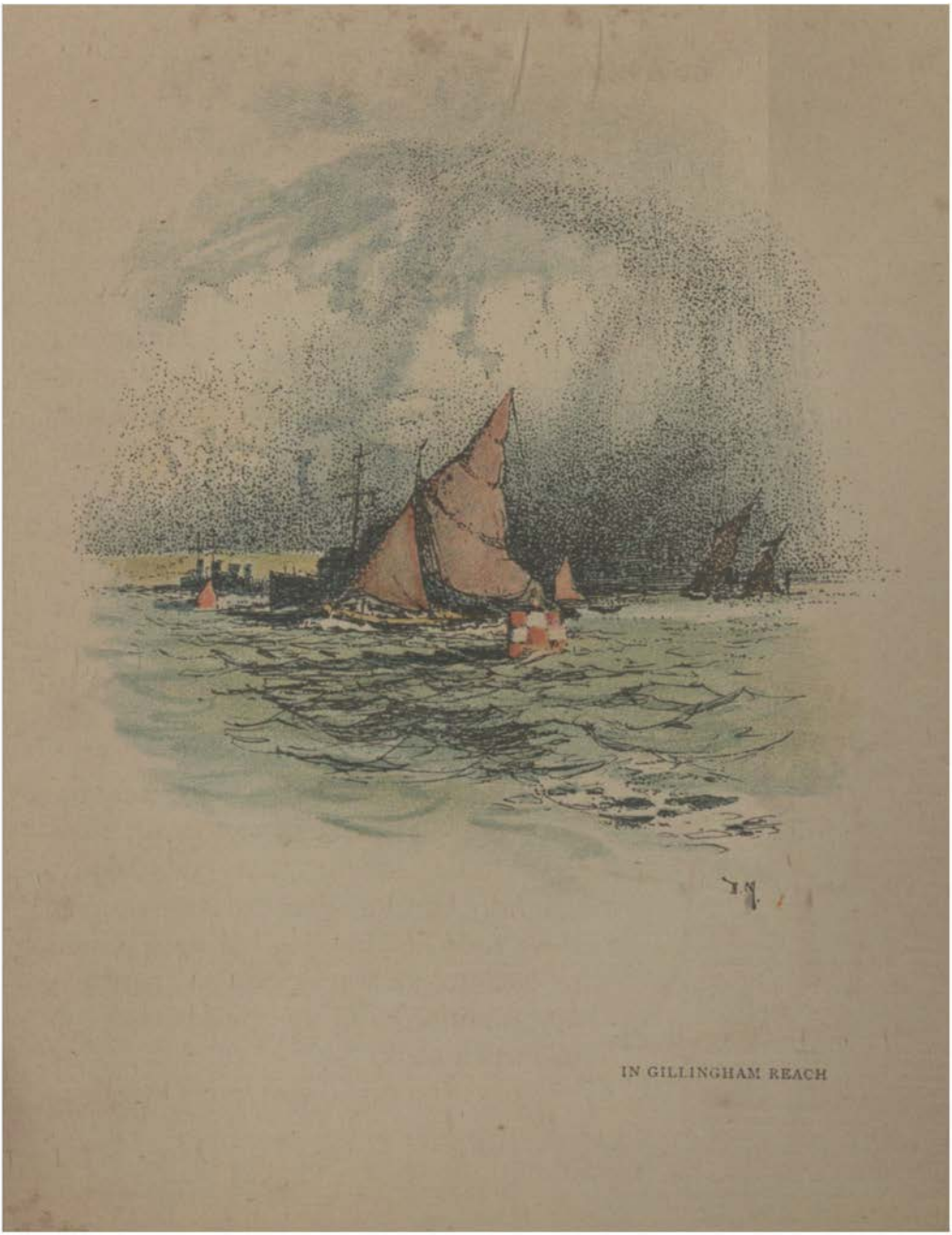
pioneers from America, visited the community. Eastchurch evolved the sea-plane, and finally the R.N.A.S.

It is so short a time ago that it seems unbelievable. I can remember flights of 30 yards while men lay down to see that the machine *did* leave the ground. Then there were joyous celebrations of the event in the old house. I remember the four first heroes, Samson, Longmore, Gregory (R.N.), and Gerrard (Marine) being taught to fly by Mr. McLean. I remember sketching Samson flying off the *Africa* with air bags tied on to his skids and then the first sea-plane. Short brothers, with indomitable faith, but by dim oil lights held aloft by successive slaves of the lamp, often supervised their men all night as they worked to prepare a machine for flight in the morning.

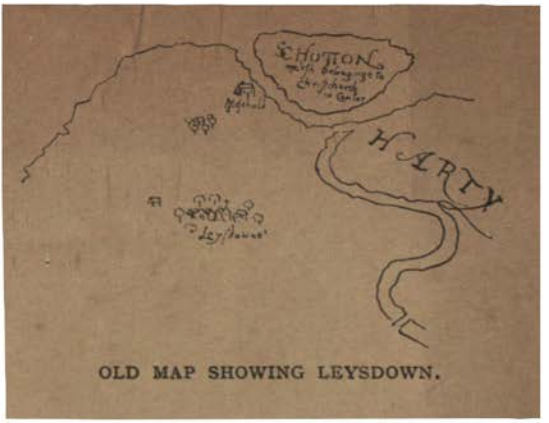
PLATES FOR SHIPBUILDING, IN CHATHAM DOCKYARD.

It is easy now to realize the military importance of mastery of the air. We have been taught that thoroughly, painfully, during years of stress. Yet these men had nothing but imagination to look to, for war science. There was no tradition, and the future was an unopened book.

Recently, on a visit to Leysdown,



IN GILLINGHAM REACH



OLD MAP SHOWING LEYSDOWN.

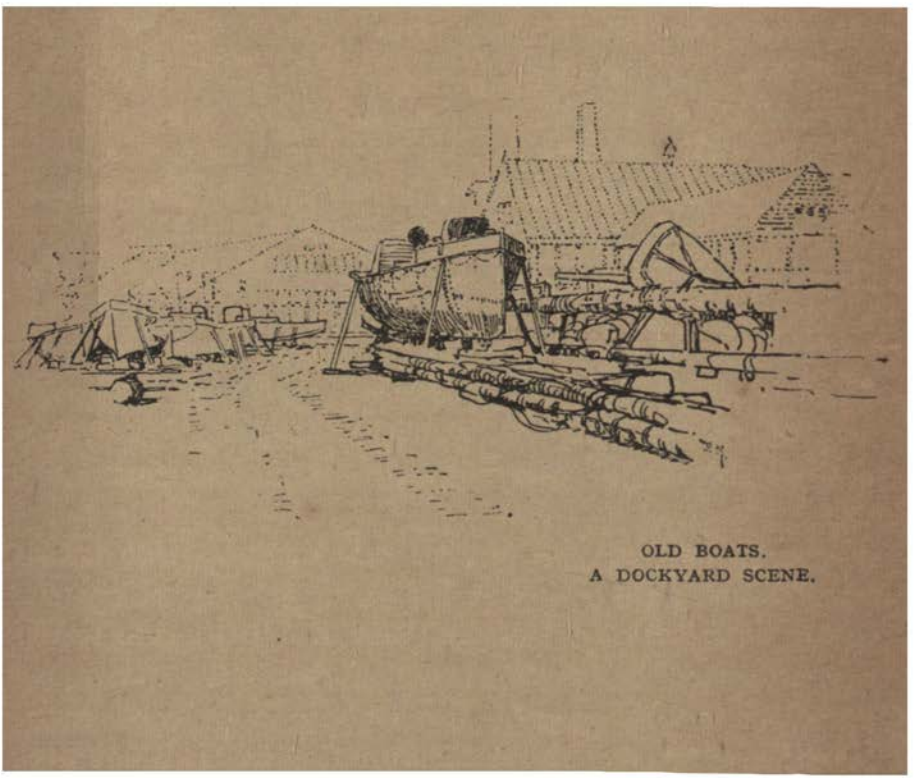
I came upon a few stones by a dyke. I examined them and found traces by them of a cement floor and the relic of what had once been the bed of an engine. It was no less a piece of history than the old foundations of Short brothers' first factory of heavier-than-air machines.

One day, with guide book in hand (I had almost written Baedekar) people will come from the east and from the west and gaze upon this ground, for out of it there grew a great service and a great tradition. Although the Royal Naval Air Service has long ago been merged in the Royal Air Force, no one will forget the grit and go of those early days.

It sounds unbelievable but it is true, that the great branch of the Navy known as the R.N.A.S. was practically the creation of Mr. Frank McLean, who, a civilian, taught the Navy to fly on his machines and at his own expense, on ground that he had bought. It is truer to say that the Navy was *allowed* to fly, for it needed a lot of push at the Admiralty. There were, however, senior officers with imagination and by means of these the great thing was done. And when the war was over, and the enormous use of flying demonstrated

even to the dullest intelligence, did the advisors of the King make amends and see that honour was given where it was most due ?

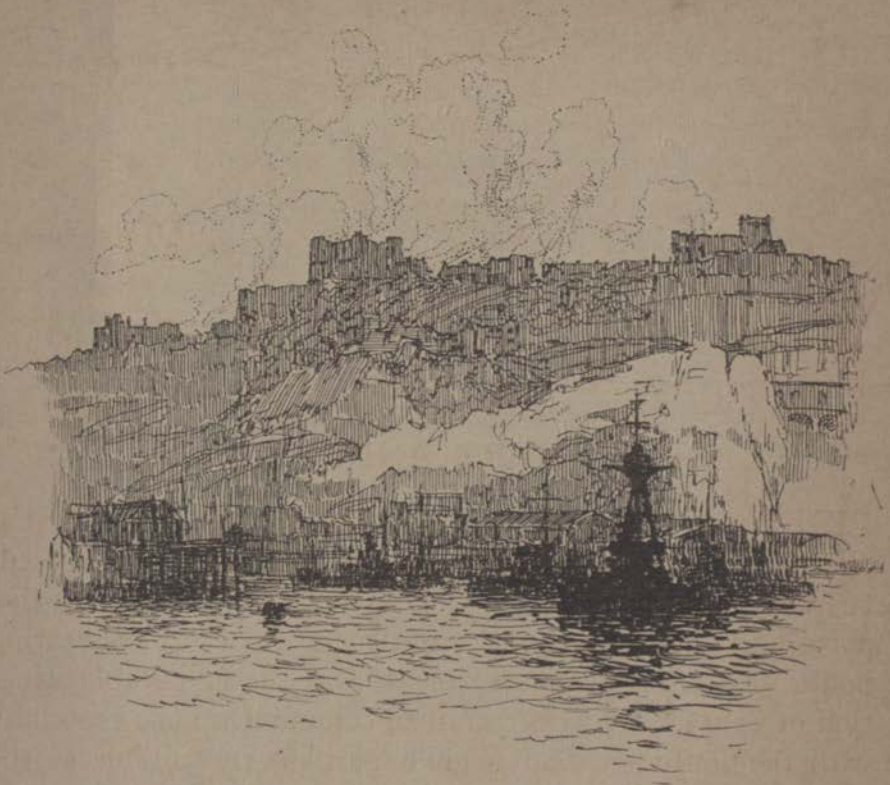
The answer is in the negative.



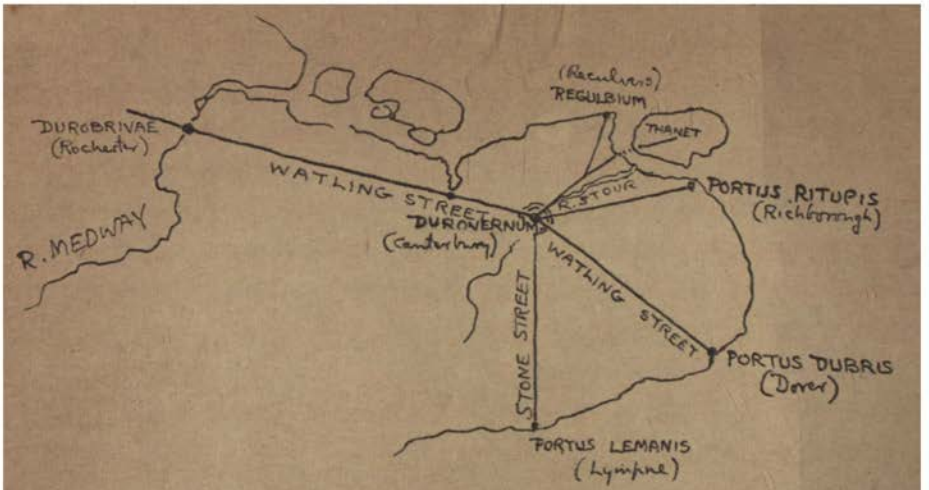
OLD BOATS.
A DOCKYARD SCENE.

XIII

CANTERBURY AND THE SEA



DOVER.



CANTERBURY AND THE ROMAN PORTS.

CANTERBURY AND THE SEA

THE importance of Canterbury as the centre of radiating roads to various posts cannot be too clearly emphasized. It was this position, within a day's march of any one of five ports north, east and south, that made it a sort of clearing house for sea-borne commerce. It was the favourable situation of Canterbury with regard to communications, especially with the Continent, that made it particularly suitable as the headquarters of the Church in South England. The life and progress of the Church was, to a large extent in early days, fostered by the position of the city, and the greatness of Canterbury was thrust upon it, by the vagaries of our much abused climate.

Sudden changes in wind and weather made it necessary

for alternative sheltered harbours to be available. In a north-easter it might be very difficult for a ship to make the northern Kentish ports, or gain the sheltered waters of the Wantsum inside Thanet; but the harbours east of Dover would be easy. If the wind chopped round to south-west, however, and this became a lee shore a ship might have to run round to the north and make for a weather shore. Thus a merchant would never know where his cargo would be landed and the line of least resistance was to sit snugly at Cānterbury, whereto all roads led, and wait for his goods. Thus Canterbury would grow in importance as trade from the Continent increased.

Even in Roman times this key situation of Canterbury with regard to ports was all important. Five Roman roads served the five harbours, Regulbium, the estuary of the Wantsum inside the Isle of Thanet, Portus Ritupis (Richborough), Portus Dubris (Dover), and Portus Lemanus (Lympne). Of these five roads I will give a brief account, as they have a great bearing on our history; the Saxons developed them and the Cinque Ports, with their members, in later days owed their land intercommunication principally to their long-established ways.

1. Stone Street, leading almost due north from Lympne to Canterbury, is a classic example of a Roman road. It is quite straight, except when it has to negotiate a very steep ascent. Here it takes a curved path, but soon becomes straight again all the way to Canterbury. Camden describes this road as paved with stones.

2. Dover to Canterbury. This is the beginning of Watling Street. It runs very much on the line of the modern road. Near Lydden a trace of the Roman road lies to the west side of the present road. On Barham Down are the remains of a Roman camp. From Lydden Hill to Canterbury, the Roman road ran absolutely straight for nine miles.

3. Richborough to Canterbury. Portus Ritupis was in Roman times an island in the channel between Thanet and the mainland—connected no doubt by a tidal causeway as was Thanet by the continuation of Sarre Wall. "It is curious," writes Codrington, "that there are few traces of the Roman road from Portus Ritupis, the usual port of entry into Britain, to Canterbury."

4. Thanet to Canterbury. This road became a causeway between Thanet and Sarre Wall to allow ships to pass over at high water. It ran to a point near Sturry.

5. Reculver to Canterbury. The present road to Sturry is more or less its course. Up Street is the only trace left, by name, on the map. This road and the one from Thanet unite and the road crosses the Stour at Fordwich proceeding to Canterbury.

This old-time connection of Canterbury with the sea is not of any vital importance to-day. Except for the fact that it happens to be on the line between Dover and London, no one now thinks of this old haunt of merchants and sea captains as having any nautical flavour at all. Richborough, with its wonderful train ferry during the war, revived once again the

old sea road and it is interesting to remember that one of the first railways in England connected Canterbury with the sea, at Whitstable harbour. This was before the days of locomotives, when trucks were hauled by winding engines along straight sections of line.

Speaking of Whitstable and its connection with the sea, do you know the old legend of its origin? It was from Canterbury, this time-honoured extravaganza tells us, Whitstable was formed and by no less an agent than the Devil himself.

I cannot give chapter and verse, but it is taken from a magazine cutting of seventy years ago.

How Whitstable was formed out of pieces of Canterbury

"Canterbury, as all the world of Kent knows, is 'no mean city' now; but six centuries ago, when it was the resort of thousands of pilgrims, it was so glorious that it excited the wrath of the foul fiend: and its inhabitants, being as bad as Jerome describes the people of Jerusalem to have been when that city, too, was famous for pilgrimages, he sought and obtained permission to cast it into the sea if the service of prayer and praise usually performed by night and by day at the tomb of St. Thomas the Martyr should be once suspended. Long and eagerly did Satan watch; but though the people grew worse daily, the religious were faithful to their duties, and he almost gave up the hope of submerging the proud city.

"At length, however, his time came. A great festival

ST. MARGARET'S BAY

had been held at which the chaplains at the saint's tomb had, of course, borne a prominent part, and when night came, utterly exhausted, they slept—all, and every one.

"The glory of Canterbury was now gone for ever. Down pounced the fiend and endeavoured to grasp the city in his arms; but though provided with claws proverbially long he was unable to embrace one half, so vast was its size. A portion, however, he seized, and having with a few strokes of his wings reached the open sea he cast in his evil burden; thrice all but annihilated, when the prayers of the neglected St. Thomas prevailed, and an angelic vision was sent to Brother Hubert the Sacristan, which roused and directed him what to do. He rushed into the church, and seizing the bell rope, he pulled vigorously. The great bell, Harry, which gives its name to the centre tower of the minster, ordinarily required the exertions of ten men to set it in motion, but it now yielded to the touch of one, and a loud boom from its consecrated metal scared the fiend just as he reached the verge of the sea; in despair he dropped his prey and fled, and Canterbury has never since excited his envy by its splendour.

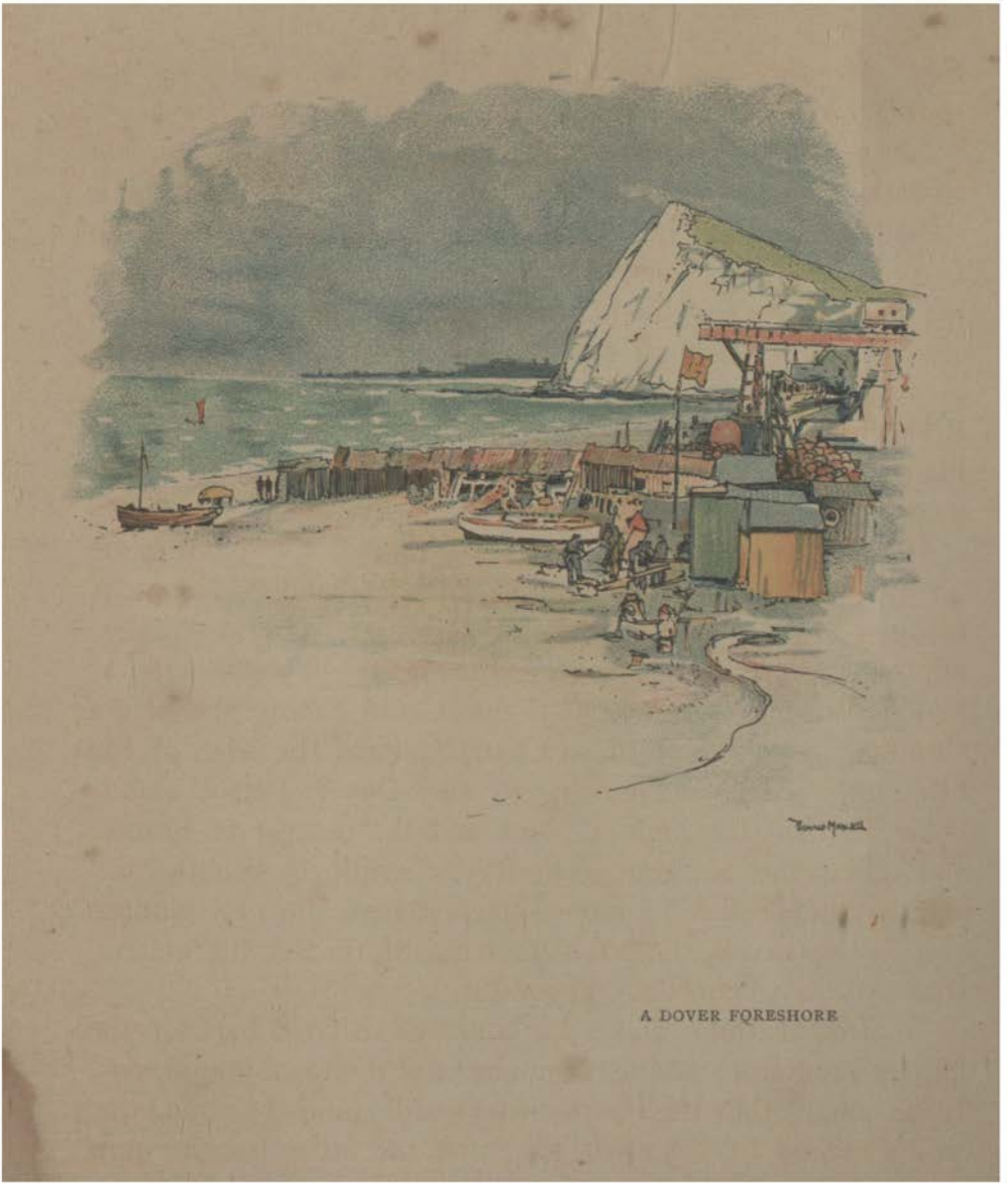
"There was a remarkable difference in the fate of the different parts of Satan's last armful from which a great moral lesson was justly drawn by my informant. Those very few houses in which more good than bad were found were preserved from destruction by falling on the hill-side, and they thus gave rise to the thriving port of Whitstable; while the great majority dropped into the sea a mile off; but antiquaries, ignorant of the facts of the case, have mistaken

them for the ruins of Roman edifices submerged by the encroaching ocean."

In order to verify by analogy my arguments for the lost Roman road from Lympne to Sutton Valence and Maidstone, I followed the Roman roads from Richborough to Dover and from Dover to Lympne, and learnt much about the habits of these lateral ways that came in useful. It is clear that Richborough, now known as rusty Richborough, on account of mountains of scrapped lorries and machinery from France, was in Roman times an island and the road from the higher ground to the south must have been in the nature of a causeway, covered by the tide, as at Sarre in Thanet.

The Roman road to Dover, however, is not so picturesque a route as the coast road, along the headlands. This way, through breezy Deal and comfortably circumstanced Walmer, approaches white walls at Kingsdown and a pleasant path, looking down on the sea, with glimpses of France and of the shipping going up or down Channel, skirts the edge of the headlands. The monument to the Dover Patrol stands boldly out on the highest point and the nearest to France, and then comes St. Margaret's Bay, charmingly situated and utterly unexpected. I have sketched here the first glimpse of it, as the traveller finds it at his feet with the South Foreland, with its squat lighthouse, beyond it.

In Roman times, Dover harbour was situated between the high ground on each side, where most of the town now stands. It is thought that the Pharos, which still stands by the castle, was matched by a similar tower on the other heights, now



A DOVER FORESHORE

known as Shakespeare's Cliff. Thus at night, when both were showing beacon lights, the entrance to Dover was far descried by the galleys coming across from Gaul.

It is probable that a great deal of these western heights has crumbled away. The slope of the ground suggests that they may have been higher, though the oft-quoted lines from *King Lear* could not be descriptive of any height less than several thousand feet, except in the vaguest and most poetical sense:

> " . . . and yond tall anchoring bark
> Diminish'd to her cock; her cock, a buoy
> Almost too small for sight; the murmuring surge
> That on the unnumber'd idle pebbles chafes
> Cannot be heard so high."

It has always seemed to me rather far-fetched calling this headland Shakespeare's Cliff, as the famous quotation from *King Lear* is not descriptive of any actual place. The scene is given as " Fields near Dover " and it is not anywhere steep or high up because Edgar is trying to persuade the blind Gloucester that he is ascending a height.

Edgar: You do climb now; look, how we labour.

Clon: Methinks the ground is even.

Edgar: Horrible steep.

Hark, do you hear the sea?

Clon: No, truly.

The famous description, supposed to be of a view from these cliffs, is an invention of Edgar's, and a magnificent word-picture to try and make Gloucester believe indeed that he is at the edge of a tremendous precipice.

I have sketched this famous headland as it appears from the beach near the Lord Warden Hotel.

A reader protests that one of the fishermen on the left is exactly like a mouse. As a matter of fact it is a boat upside down, on trestles. I reply, however, by pointing out the remarkable resemblance, in any case, between the fishermen of Dover and mice. Shakespeare says so, and surely he was a keen observer of men. Here it is, chapter and verse:

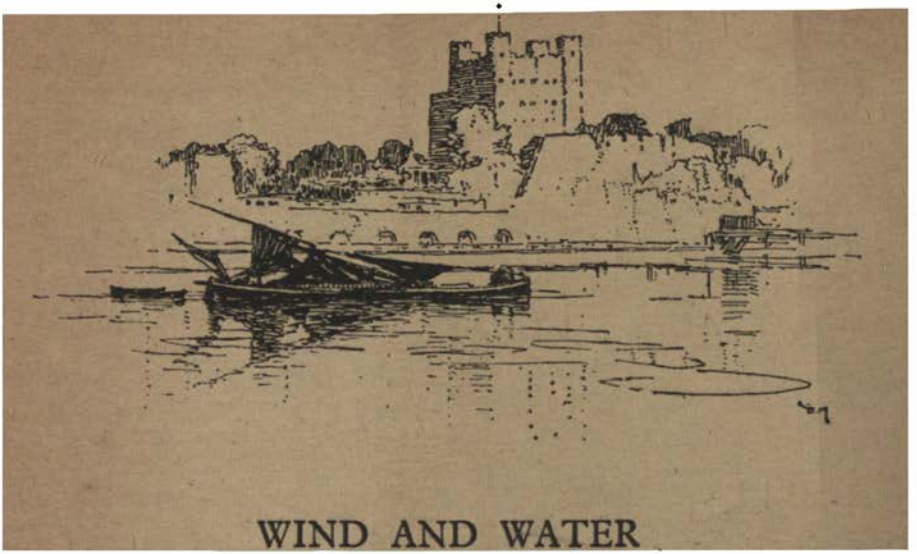
> "The Fishermen that walk upon the beach
> *Appear like mice.*"
>
> *King Lear, Act IV. Scene VI.*

KINGSDOWN.

XIV

WIND AND WATER

DELCE MILL,
ROCHESTER.



WIND AND WATER

WERE it not that the term huffling was in vogue before Lewis Carroll invented the portmanteau word, we might have explained its origin by saying that it was meant to denote a combination of hurrying and scuffling. It is certainly an expressive word. It is a still more exciting occupation. The manœuvring of a sailing barge, lowering her mast as she negotiates the bridge, and then getting all her tackle up again, if possible, without having to anchor—this is the work of a huffler, or bridge-pilot. In the London river a pilot must be licensed, but in the Swale and Medway, at King's Ferry and Rochester, it is a case of the survival of the fittest. Any of us could take a boat and cadge for a job, but I don't think

we should be at it long. It is quite easy to get killed or to lose a mast by any of a hundred and one errors of judgment. For a barge to engage a huffler is practically compulsory, because the insurance companies would repudiate a claim for accident made by a skipper who had taken the bridge without assistance.

The huffler waits in his boat about half a mile from the bridge. He boards his barge—you can always tell a barge with a huffler on board by the two boats in tow—takes charge, for he is now responsible, and, with the skipper and mate assisting, gets the tackle ready for lowering away. With a following wind it is simple to lower and get up tackle again without risk of getting stuck or having to anchor, but the niceties of huffling are to be seen when the barge is tacking; the wind blowing from the direction of the bridge she is approaching. A tack to the side of the river, then she goes about and makes a short tack to the central arch. Then, when perilously near the bridge, she lowers away, dives into the teeth of the wind, and passes under the arch. As soon as she is through, her helm is put over to keep her at an angle to catch the wind again, and all hands strenuously work at the winch, her heavy canvas flapping noisily and everything, apparently, at sixes and sevens. With luck she will have her mast sufficiently raised to go about before reaching the shallows of the bank, and then get off in proper trim. Sometimes her foresail is gathered up on the stay before lowering. Sometimes, however, when the wind is light she will duck her canvas with foresail still spread to give her the maximum sail area.

THE MEDWAY FROM ROCHESTER STATION.

I have known a barge dismasted owing to a gust of wind filling her sail at the last moment of lowering, so that her mast would not budge. In bad weather it is often a dangerous game, and men have been killed through tackle breaking. On the whole, however, it is amazing how few accidents happen. At times, in windy weather, you can see half a dozen barges flopping about the river like wounded birds, and at night there seems to the onlooker on shore to be a scene of indescribable confusion, yet they will sort themselves out in a few minutes and proceed on their journey as if bridges were things that had never entered into their calculations—thanks to the huffler.

This exciting manœuvre of getting down tackle and up again, if possible without dropping anchor, can be witnessed in a lesser degree at King's Ferry bridge, near Queenborough, but the strong tides of the Medway give an extra zest to the huffler's art in Rochester.

Barges with their picturesque lines and pleasing colouring seem to show no signs of being displaced by modern progress. The sailing ship may become a thing of the past, but the sailing barge, on account of its cheapness, will stay. It is amazing where they can go, handled by only two men, and

sometimes by a man and a boy. In Holland, in Germany, in Belgium, and in France the traveller will see the familiar red sails of Thames and Medway barges. In old pictures of a hundred years ago the English sailing barge seemed to be almost identical with her successor of to-day except for the square sail, which was a feature of those times. It is probably the difficulty of handling this auxiliary that has led to its abandonment.

Probably in those days, when labour was cheaper, more hands were carried. Two men can negotiate almost any weather with a spritsail barge, because the mainsail is brailed as it stands, and the foresail and topsail come down with a run on letting go the halyard and cannot very well get into difficulties.

Rochester, too, can boast of another unique feature, a feature which I think no other city can produce. Amidst dense streets, and built in by a hundred houses, can be seen an old-time windmill, still at work, a classic example of *rus in urbe*, defying change and even glorying in it. The jolly miller laughs at miners and cares not twopence for the present price of coal. The mill is Delce Mill, and the jolly miller is Mr. W. J. Glover, who has "sailed" this mill for the last fifty years.

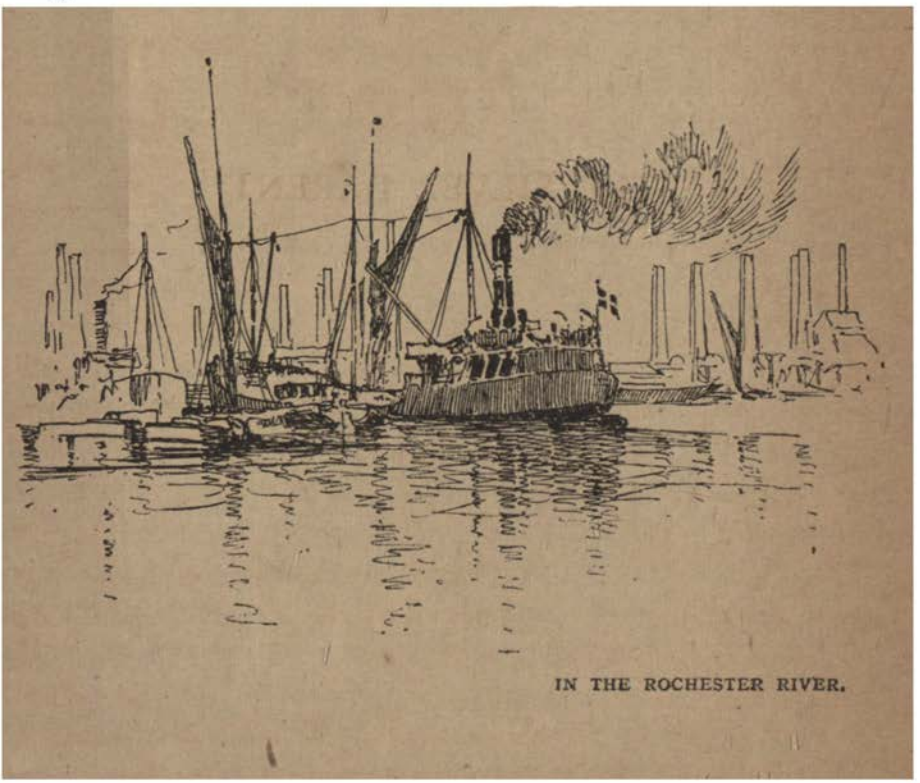
The Rochester mill, however, though it glories in its past, is quite up to date, and is fitted with the modern shutter sails, with slats set at right angles to the sweep. When the mill is idle, to bring it into action the slats are slanted (like those of a Venetian blind) according to the amount of wind to be

"held." Weights check the angle of the slats and they work automatically like the governor of an engine, so that a sudden gust will open them slightly and let the wind through. I found that if in windless weather—and there is not much of this in the Medway Valley—there was work that would not wait, an auxiliary steam-engine was used to drive the mill using up half a ton of coal.

In spite, however, of all these devices, the miller admits that it is impossible, under the present conditions of working, to compete with mills which are operated by means of steam, owing to the lowness of the horse-power which can be secured and the smallness of the plant. Mr. Glover is, nevertheless, something of a prophet. Looking back into the past he can remember the time when no less than twenty-two windmills were visible from this ridge above Rochester. Now there are only two, one a ruin and the other out of action. Looking forward into the future, he foresees a time when the present difficulties about fuel will, to some extent, be overcome by making use of the literally unlimited power of the winds. The wind cannot be used up. A hundred windmills, unless built too near together, will have a hundred times the power of one. If for want of room these had to be packed rather tight, a line of them built close together at right angles to the prevailing wind would seldom suffer through this proximity on account of the fact that the wind would not often blow from the disadvantageous quarter.

One of the practical difficulties in the way of getting many disused windmills into working order, is the fact that the

millwright's craft is, in some counties, almost a defunct one. However, the windmill of the future will probably be on different lines from the old-time windmill, and will be constructed of steel. "Wind towers" of open trellis will carry the sweeps, and many wheels will co-operate to drive one plant. The system that is already in use in many country houses for generating electric light will possibly be used on a larger scale.

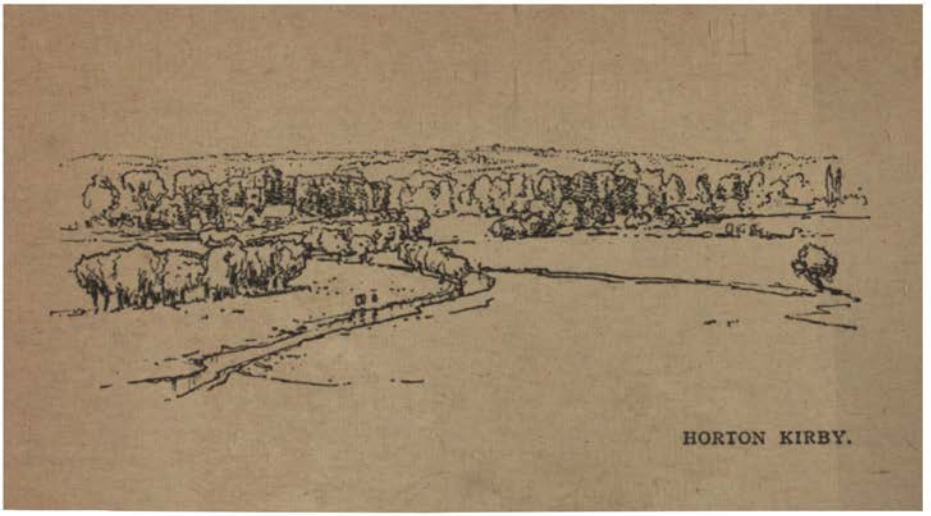


IN THE ROCHESTER RIVER.

XV

THE SILVER DARENT

EYNESFORD BRIDGE.



HORTON KIRBY.

THE SILVER DARENT

DO you know what it is to have in your imagination a place which you seem to know quite well, which you have never seen? For years I used to romance about a little bit of valley in the Vosges. A glimpse of it could be obtained from the main line of the Ostend-Basle express. Every time I proceeded with sketch books and paints on lawful occasions to Switzerland or Italy or Austria—nearly always travelling by this route—I looked out for my little valley. I saw it by moonlight, by grey light and sunlight, but never had time to stop. At last, one day, I packed a bag and started for this valley of mystery, changed at Strassburg into a local train and found that my anticipations were delightfully fulfilled.

There is a little place on the line between London and Chatham, it is just beyond Farningham Road station to the right, which for years exercised somewhat the same fascination upon me—a green valley with wandering streams and willows, a church and a mill and the promise of high lands and hanging woods beyond. I have sketched this glimpse of it at the head of the chapter. Most people naturally think it is Farningham because of the station's name, but it is Horton Kirby, Farningham being some two miles further up the valley. For the same reason as in the case of my valley in the Vosges I never explored it, because I was always hurrying on the way to or from London and never had time.

One day, however, when this view looked altogether delightful in the early morning sun, I decided on an impromptu tour. I was bound for London, but I decided that London should wait. I imagined it might bear up if I didn't arrive till the next day. I therefore sacrificed my ticket to Victoria. As I am a Scotsman as well as a Man of Kent this shows how excited I must have been.

I found the valley of the Darent held the delights that I had expected. As it narrows between steep-wooded hills there are a hundred harmonies in green and silver. Horton Kirby church, in spite of an ugly tower, is a surprise within—old and built of a white stone not unlike marble. The old Elizabethan manor, Franks, is a delight to the eye, reflecting itself in the quiet waters of the stream. This place was somewhat marred by modern alterations and incongruous oriental additions, but Lord Bathurst acquired this home of

FRANKS.

his ancestors when it was in the market some time ago—it had been unfortunately sold out of the family—and restored it to its original style.

I found that the neighbourhood of Eynesford boasted two castles and a quaint bridge and then, pursuing my way up stream as the valley sides steepened towards Knockholt and Sevenoaks, discovered a mill. It is an old-time affair. I came upon it down a steep road, as sketched opposite, and indeed in the evening light it might have been a little bit of the Black Forest. It is used for the manufacture of hand-made paper.

Talking of paper, however, reminds me that I have come to the end of my space, so I will end my story of Kent here, to the pleasant noise of waters by Shoreham Mill.

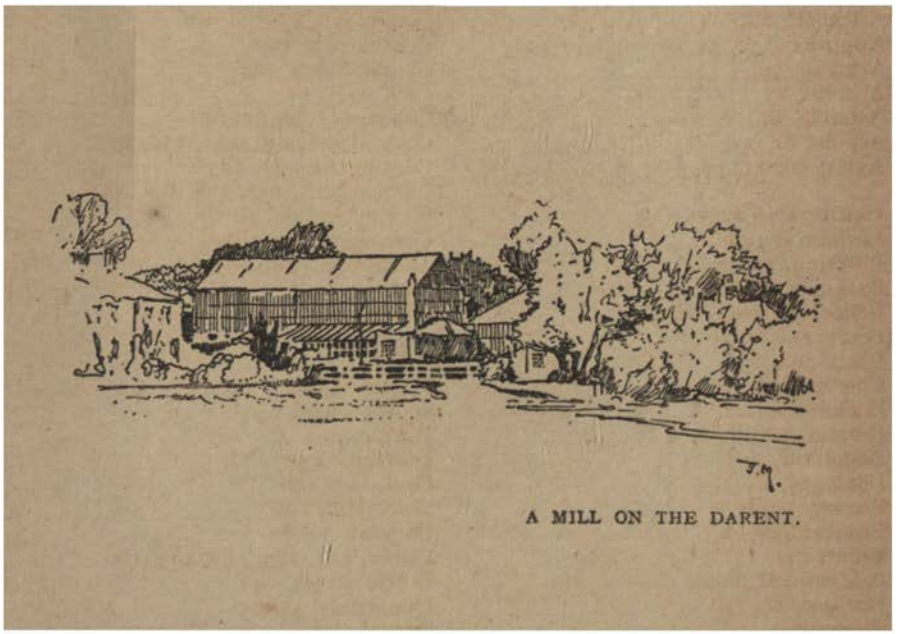
It is a fragmentary story and one with obvious and lamentable gaps, but I hope the reader will look upon these chapters as overtures to his own further exploration. Here and there I have suggested a road that will yield great delight to the traveller if he will push on, although I myself have not had time to go far upon it. Of all the counties of England, I think Kent, perhaps, holds the greatest variety of subject for the painter.

Contrast the rolling chalk downs of Dover and long level marshlands of the Thames. Compare the high woods of Knockholt with the wind-blown shores of Sheppey. Think of the breezy downs as seen from Kingsdown, and the quiet meadows of the Weald by Tenterden Tower. Call to mind nocturnes in blue and gold among the magic night scenery of

SHOREHAM MILL.

the land of cement and of the Medway, and then remember haunts of ancient peace nestling silently beneath unfrequented hills, or grim Chatham with its walls of steel, and tell me if there is any other county with such a goodly range of subject.

"Not these alone, but every landscape fair
As fit for every mood of mind
Or gay, or grave, or sweet, or stern, was there
Not less than truth designed."



A MILL ON THE DARENT.

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on 11 March, 2020